NEW

LANDLORD'S TALES;

OR,

JEDEDIAH IN THE SOUTH.

"Does your master travel upwards or downwards?"—
"Downwards, I fear—." BEAUX STRATAGEM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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OF

VOLUME THE SECOND.



NEW LANDLORD'S TALES.

CONSTANCY, IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

After the peace of eighteen hundred and fourteen, or rather, immediately upon the return of the Bourbons to France, all the English, of every rank and condition, young and old, gentle and simple, dolts and philosophers, whigs and tories, the educated and the ignorant, the bustling and the indolent, those who could afford it and those who could not, were alike seized with the travelling mania; and went, or intended to go, abroad. Nobody can be surprised,

then, if Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick, the heir apparent to so large a fortune, that it was not deemed necessary for him to assume even the semblance of belonging to any profession, and who had left Cambridge that very spring, determined on an expedition to the continent.

George was not universally well spoken of by his College acquaintance. Who ever is? Those who disliked him said, that he was conceited, egotistical, and sensual; by which last epithet, they are supposed to have meant—not addicted, so much, to certain vices which had the sanction of all the young men in the University, and of many others—but that he pampered his appetite; that he was a glutton, in short, and a prodigious hand at getting up little choice dinners; less on account of the select society who might meet at them, than because they all agreed in essentials, upon certain culinary points, that is to say, which at these festivals were scrupulously attended to.

They also added (those who were averse to him), that on no occasion whatever, in sporting or conversing, riding or walking, eating, or, perhaps, even sleeping,—was George Jeffery Trecothick, with the large fortune to which he had expectations, out of his thoughts for a moment. On the other hand, his friends, or, to speak more accurately, his set, described him less unfavourably.

According to these, Trecothick was mild in his manners, civil, and gentleman-like, and possessed a good deal of information, with some cleverness; though not, perhaps, such a share of the last as he gave himself credit for. He was likewise, as these gentlemen represented (though many differed), handsome; indeed, by a slight mutual concession, all difference on that subject was obviated. "Allow us," said the former party, "that he has a handsome face, and we will concede to you, that it is by no means an agreeable one."

He had his faults, to be sure; those, even his best friends must acknowledge. A shade of self-love, they could not but admit in his character; but palliated it candidly, or, at all events, accounted for it naturally, by urging, that he was the only child of a rich, indulgent, and not over sapient father.

"And when you come to consider Trecothick's advantages," said one of his young friends, in conversation, "you can only wonder that he is not more set up. All I say, is this: that, if I was in Trecothick's place, I should be apt to vote myself somebody—I know that. Why—he is not only heir to seven thousand a year, his father having promised to give him up fifteen hundred a year, as soon as he has taken his degree—but, to my knowledge, he is engaged to as sweet a girl as ever you saw. Aye, an uncommon nice girl! Caroline Cooksley——of a Sussex family, they tell me. I saw her, at a public ball, last Christmas. A lovely girl, by Jove! person, and

face, and every thing.—Good fortune, too, they say; and what more would you have!"

Now what this young gentleman here thought proper to assert, happened to be very little, if at all over-stated; and, on taking his degree, and getting his accession of income, Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick committed himself to the tide of emigration, which, setting in with the troubles of our neighbours, bore the French to our shores at the commencement, and us to their's, at the end of the revolution.

Mr. Trecothick, sated by such pleasures as were within his reach, and not partaking, by habit, or natural disposition, of many in which other men of his own age delighted—for instance, he had little inclination to field diversions, or to any, generally speaking, which required much exertion—had been one of those, who were used to evince their taste and refined ideas, by grievous lamentations, because the continent was closed against them; while they had grown heartily tired of Cumberland

lakes, Welch mountains, northern Highlands, and all those scenes connected with various parts of Scotland, which have been immortalized in our day, both by verse and prose. When Europe, therefore, was once more open to them, it seemed natural to expect that they should make the utmost of their liberty; and Mr. George Trecothick resolved he would do so. He would remain abroad three years, he said, at the least; he would not merely look at, but fully understand, every thing that he met with—in Italy more particularly. He would study mankind, as well as pictures and statues. He would correct the inaccuracies of annual registers, and the partiality of gazettes, by local information and local observation of the fields on which the chief actions of that mighty drama had been performed, which was now brought, gloriously, to its termination. He would do fifty other things—before he set out; but he had not been abroad exactly three weeks, when he made a discovery that travelling on the

continent abounded in petty inconveniences, and undignified vexations; that the French were demoralized by the revolution; that, from the best, they had become the worst-bred people in Europe: and that, though their cookery was new to him, generally pleasant, and in some places exquisite, it was extremely unequal, and the ordinary wine which is drank at dinner often disagreed with him.

In addition to all this, Mr. Trecothick and his friend and fellow-traveller, came, unfortunately, to a quarrel, and parted company. A serious loss to George; for the other spoke French fluently, if not well; whereas, of the numerous accomplishments which Trecothick boasted, this did not happen to be one. As to the disagreement which terminated in their separation, it would be our wish to have given an impartial account of it; but what immediately and particularly caused their final rupture, we never exactly heard, and can only mention,

in a sweeping way, the accusations made on both sides.

Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick complained, that his companion was unaccommodating, that he was rude and careless in his manners, stiff in his opinions, inapt to perceive what course of conduct and conversation would be most likely to please, and neglectful of pleasing when he did perceive it.——The friend, on the other hand, spoke of our hero with a bluntness which might seem to justify some of the former charges against himself. He said—without mincing the matter—that he expected to have met, in George Jeffery Trecothick, a rational, easy-tempered, agreeable, and sensible companion; but that he had found him a selfish hound.

Trecothick, after his fellow-traveller had left him, grew more and more disgusted with the continent; he discovered himself to be no object of interest to any human being—excepting just as much as his money could render him one; and even at inns, he

fretted bitterly, alleging, that his bell was invariably the last in the house to which the waiter attended, and that he verily believed there was an universal conspiracy to torment and mortify him. Old England, he said to himself, was the country after all; the county of Sussex, the place, in general, within that country,—and the village of Wrexington, where his own father's seat and principal property lay, was the place, in particular. How any man, who could command bread and cheese at home, much more a man in a great situation, with an important stake in the country, could be so miserable a fool as ever, voluntarily, to quit its shores, was to him utterly incomprehensible. "Then, the women!" so he continued his soliloquy, "Lord have mercy upon us! Not one of them fit to hold a candle to Caroline Cooksley, that delightful girl, whom I may say, without fear of contradiction, I am to consider as my own; and who has beauty sufficient to raise her pretensions to any match, even if she had

not (which she most certainly has) fortune enough to give her every claim, independent of her eminent personal advantages!" To Miss Cooksley, then, would his thoughts revert with great complacency, and with consolation for the slights which he had endured in France and elsewhere; though, at the same time, it must be admitted, that she had not occupied his mind in an equal degree, during the latter period of his residence at Cambridge. No doubt, whenever she was mentioned—and she could hardly be mentioned without admiration—by other young men, Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick was willing enough to encourage the flattering topic, and to communicate among the favoured few, how, their parents having agreed upon the future match, the young lady had assented, with a readiness highly complimentary to him, and, which was more, he fairly allowed, than he deserved. Because, as, of his own accord, he should not, perhaps, have been in haste to marry so early, he had never (he confessed) paid

her any particular attention. Her preference, therefore, for him was what must gratify the feelings of any man; and had so far gratified his—that he gave them his honour he should hold the engagement sacred, even although the finest and most fashionable women in England were to honour him with their partiality. He did not (as he modestly added) suppose they would; but, if they did,—he begged leave to say—it would be of no use.

Notwithstanding this sort of pleasing discourse, which occurred not unfrequently, Mr. Trecothick, feeling that this admired girl had, as it were, dropped into his arms, and that he was sure of her, without further trouble or anxiety, did not dwell upon her image, with all the rapture and continued idolatry of a lover; but suffered days, and sometimes weeks, to go by, without thinking of her at all. Indeed, it has been suggested (though we are resolved not to credit it), that the subject was, once or twice, peevishly dismissed from his mind,

as having a tendency to abridge his personal liberty. But now, after being deserted,—so he expressed himself,—by his false friend, and "abandoned" by all mankind, (for that was the term which he chose, instead of "overlooked") Mr. George Trecothick began really to acknowledge and be sensible of the great merit which must belong to any body who could fall in love with him; and especially to so pretty a girl as, beyond all question, Miss Cooksley was. He now found out, that he had been too long blind to his own happiness; that he could not exist without his Caroline; that it was a man's duty, moreover, to spend his money for the benefit of his own countrymen, rather than of foreigners; and that it became him to live where he was most looked up to, and, consequently, where he could do the most good.

His unanswerable reasoning upon these points, was followed up by immediate letters, announcing his return home; one of these was addressed to his delighted father,

and the other to his not less delighted Caroline; of whom it is now high time to give some account. Miss Cooksley, from the moment she was able to comprehend any thing, had been in the habit of hearing from nursery maids, governesses, aunts, and even from her mother, a silly, violent, and inconsistent woman, that females were sent into this world to be married; that, sooner or later, they all fulfilled the end of their creation, except such as were marked out by nature for objects of misfortune, neglect, and scorn; and, consequently, since the remaining single all her days was a state not to be thought of—that the great aim of life was to be WELL married. Then ensued the different pretensions of her various female friends and acquaintance, her own superior advantages, and the young people of the other sex in their neighbourhood and county, who were destined, by her mother and favourite maid, to be distributed, some day or other, amongst these misses. In the enumeration of the future

husbands, Miss Caroline heard of nobody so much and so perpetually as of Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick. Their fathers' estates were contiguous; the Trecothick property being by far the best of the two; then George was so polite, and so much of a gentleman; even when at school, so superior to school-boys; wore gloves; made a bow with as much ease and grace as if he had been five-and-twenty; never came into the drawing-room all in a heat, like a plough-boy; took his part, effectively too, in conversation; knew more, or talked as if he knew more of what was going on in the world, than some members of Parliament; and could hand a lady a chair at the right moment, and in the right manner, without endangering all the china in the apartment. Then, her maid said, he was so handsome; and, above every thing else—such a catch! that Miss Cecilia This, and Miss Julia That, and Lady Augusta Tother, all set their caps at him, before he had been a year at the university. When

When Mrs. Cooksley, therefore, intimated to her daughter, that if she should happen to like Mr. George Trecothick—(which, as her Caroline was a sensible child, indeed, remarkably forward in understanding, and, she thanked Heaven, free from all nonsense and romance—she could not doubt, must be the case)—matters were so arranged that the young gentleman would assuredly be at her feet;——when these tidings were duly announced, Miss Caroline smirked, promised faithfully to be docile and dutiful; and said, that if she had ever thought of love at all (she was then barely turned of fifteen), Mr. Trecothick was certainly the object of her choice. From this conference, she immediately ran up stairs to her governess, whom she apprized of the important secret, with the highest possible glee; rubbing her hands and jumping about the room; and, in short, exactly as she would have told her of any other impending treat:—the going to L—— races, or the having got leave to dine down in the

parlour with papa and mamma from that day forward.

Miss Cooksley, however, at the period when we are writing, was two years older, and had been out a good deal in the interim. She had passed a spring in London; a winter in Bath; had visited, for two or three days together, at the houses of friends in their own country; had attracted considerable notice, and danced with some smart, lively, and agreeable men. But our earliest impressions are not easily worn off; Caroline long remembered the triumphant moment when her mother had assured her (with much more confidence than the fact would justify), that she was possessed of young Trecothick's affections; and, wherever she might go, or whomsoever she might see, she still continued constant, and in love, as she called it, with Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick. When she received his letter, therefore, expressed in terms of more than common admiration, warmth, and tenderness, and declaring an

intention of cutting short his grandest of tours, and returning to England forthwith: she counted the hours, absolutely, till his arrival might be expected from minute to minute. One whole Saturday, from breakfast till dinner time, did she sit at home, or only walk about her father's garden, within sight of the house, in full persuasion, that, after a hasty greeting with his own family, her lover would fly to her with impatience. She began to fret; she sent three times to inquire whether he had yet made his appearance at his father's place, Wrexington; and, on being informed in the negative, she scolded her governess, who was still retained in the family as an humble friend, because he had not.

The day wore on: dinner was announced; and Caroline coming down very late, Mr. Cooksley was about to have made some remark upon that circumstance, when his wife stopped him short, with a hint, conveyed by a frightful screw of her mouth, which directed his attention to the

glum looks and red eyes of their daughter. He smiled covertly, and repressed his observation, knowing full well that it was an unpropitious moment with their pretty little idol; and turning to Miss Sunburn, the governess, he asked her to drink a glass of wine. "Do you like this Madeira?" said he; "'tis some I got of Jacobs; and I don't feel quite safe with it. No! Do you really think it tolerable? I say, Miss Sunburn, you have been out to-day, between the showers:—any accounts from Wrexington?" Here the ci-devant governess made a hideous face, in her turn; lengthening her upper lip, which was never too short, and protruding it over the other, till it approached her chin; at the same time touching the left side of her nose with her finger.

Total silence now until the second course: when Mr. Cooksley, being probably of opinion that he had a right to say one word to his own child during the meal, observed, "You eat nothing, my dear.

You may call this making a dinner; but I only know, that if I were to eat as little, I should fancy myself very ill. You must not permit trifles and little disappointments to cut you down so, Caroline."

"And who told you, papa," said the young lady, "that I was disappointed at all! Who told you that any body at Wrexington, or any where else, had the power of making me uneasy for even half a minute! I hope it is not to be inferred that one is broken-hearted, because one does not devour three or four pounds of every dish that comes up to table."

Thus rebuked, the indulgent father held his tongue. The evening proceeded very heavily. Miss Caroline retired to bed at half past nine; and the fit of ill humour lasted till the middle of the following day; when Miss Sunburn dispelled it, by complimenting Caroline upon her strength of mind, and the admirably collected manner in which she had attended to the service of the church; thus evincing (she said) that

her feeling and sensibility, exquisite as they were, could be held in proper subjection to her firmness and fortitude. This mode of commendation was judicious, and, to the fair Caroline, new, moreover. She rallied upon it with effect: she said, that, if a philosopher in any respect, she was one in not permitting little things to disturb her mind. She had wondered, therefore, at her father's lecture to her, during dinner, the day before; but that, in truth, her character was very little known to papa; that it was justly appreciated by her dear Miss Sunburn alone:—and getting into comfortable spirits, she did, really, half believe that she had been thinking of her devotions all church time, instead of what might be going on at Wrexington.

In the progress of the day, her philosophy gained so much ground, that she made an excellent dinner; was extremely gracious to both her parents; and conversed upon the impossibility of every thing going smoothly in this life, and the folly of ex-

pecting it—in a manner that brought tears into her mother's eyes; drew screams of applause from Miss Sunburn; and kept Mr. Cooksley awake a full quarter of an hour longer than was usual with him, on a Sunday night. And next morning, when she had learnt for certain that Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick would actually be at home in the course of that day; she settled, internally, that the news was a reward for her own patient, firm, and excellent behaviour.

For the last three weeks she had pretty constantly occupied the thoughts of Mr. George Trecothick, and to far more serious purpose than had ever been the case before. He barely remained, therefore, as long as was decent with his own father; and, eager to embrace her whom of all human kind he now admired the most, loved the most, and (for the proofs she had given of good taste) respected the most; he hurried over to St. Mary Ottley, for such was the name of Mr. Cooksley's seat. Overflowing with

affability, he made low bows to all the labourers who pulled off their hats to him, on his way; he addressed those of the servants of St. Mary Ottley, whom he knew, by their names; he smiled upon those whom he did not know; he grasped Mr. Cooksley's hands as if he never meant to let them go again; he saluted Mrs. Cooksley; looked eagerly round the room for Caroline; and, perceiving that she was absent, his countenance fell. He expressed his hopes that she might be in good health; but in such a tone, as made it doubtful whether he was uneasy about her, or hurt at any thing that had happened to himself. Mrs. Cooksley began to talk of his trip to the continent. She was not a well educated woman, and said Genoa for Geneva, every time. But he never found her out, or never listened to her; and, if he had been obliged to speak in his turn, it seemed likely that his very first reply would have apprized them of the alteration in his feelings since he came into the house;—when

the lovely Caroline appeared, and set all right in an instant.

"I am so delighted to see you, George!" said she, holding out her hand, and her eyes sufficiently proclaiming that she had spoken the truth; "I heard that you were to be at Wrexington to-day; but never supposed Mr. Trecothick would let you leave him so soon, whatever might be your own inclination; and, do you know, you had been ten minutes or more in this very house before those stupid people thought of telling me that you were even come home. Well, and how have you been?"

"Nothing to complain of, I thank you, as far as health was concerned."

"And were you gratified, and diverted, and happy?"

"How could I be so?" replied Trecothick, looking fondly upon her, and at that moment actually fancying that he had given up his expedition solely on her account: "How could I be so, when absent from you—uncertain how and when I

should hear from you—and having to look forward to months, if not years, of continued separation! Caroline, my sweetest Caroline, I have made the experiment, and it will not do. All the memorable places that I have visited, all the scenery of Switzerland, all the agrèmens of Paris (and nobody, let me tell you, could more thoroughly have enjoyed them than myself, had not SOMETHING been wanting), failed to withdraw my mind from the only subject which ever does, or can steadily fix it. And my speedy re-appearance in this place, when I had purposed to travel over half Europe, must, one would think, convince you that I was *not* happy." All the while he spoke, he still continued to hold Miss Cooksley's hand within his; and at the conclusion, he looked full in her face. The tenderest glances were exchanged between them; and, with a smile of the most entire and universal satisfaction, she sat down by him upon the sofa, resting her head against his shoulder.

"Charming!" said her mother, who enjoyed all this love-making to the full as much as the young couple; "and since Mr. George Trecothick is come back, and has given up all these pleasures and fine sights, for the sake of his country neighbours—we must see what we can do to repay him."

"The best thing we can do," said ol Cooksley, "will be to take ourselves off, and leave him and the girl together. I don't suppose he came posting home for my sake; nor for yours neither, Mrs. Cooksley; ha, ha, ha, ha! Your talking of repaying him puts me in mind of old Sam Twaddleton, when he took it into his head that Kitty Crudwell had followed him to Buxton. Did you ever hear that story, George? I wish I could tell it as well as Frank Kidderley. You've met old Twaddleton—you must have heard of him at least?—Fancied he'd a taste for pictures, you know; and had a way of standing on one leg, like an aquatic fowl—"

"I thought, Mr. Cooksley," cried his wife, "that you had proposed our leaving Caroline and Mr. Trecothick by themselves?"

"Well, well, so I did; but where's the hurry? I haven't five more words to say—"

"Then you may say those at dinner-time; for Mr. George, I trust, will pass the evening here—"

"Aye, aye," replied the father; "have it all your own way; it wouldn't be you else. Away with you—and I shan't be long behind: but by dinner-time, I know as well as any thing, I shall have forgot all about the matter."

Fast as the tongues of Miss Cooksley and Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick had been going before the elder pair quitted the room, they ran on afterwards with tenfold velocity; and, though we may hope that they have since experienced more rational moments, it may be doubted, whether they ever, in the whole course of their lives, knew any of such unmingled gratification,

as passed, or rather flew, between this juncture and the time when they went up to dress for dinner.

For the most part, although they talked both at once, neither seemed to have lost a word of what the other said—and it would have been a great pity if they had; for both, secure of receiving back as good as they brought, dealt, in the happiest turned sentences, such assurances of eternal fondness as were quite affecting, and flattery, which came fluent from the mouth and warm from the heart.

But it is not, unfortunately, in nature, to go on long at this full stretch. We have said, indeed, that their bliss remained pure till dressing time; but that is as much as we can venture to say: and we feel ourselves obliged to admit—not without sorrow and shame—that if there was any relaxation in these raptures at all, the ebb commenced on the side of the gentleman. From talking of their mutual virtues, feeling hearts, and weaknesses, which (accord-

ing to them) were more amiable than the whole catalogue of virtues put together, they came—at least Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick came, to remarks, which, though still highly complimentary, were more personal than ever.

"As I have been sincere in many points, Caroline," said he, "I mean to be so in all; and shall tell you freely, therefore, that in countenance you are greatly—very greatly—improved. In common with all who ever saw you," he added, laughing, "I always thought you pretty; but you have now an expression as much above mere prettiness, as the hues of a landscape are superior to the glare of a gaudy painted window."

"I know nothing about all that," replied Miss Cooksley; "but I am glad you think so. Joy, my dear George, is an effective brightener of the countenance."

He pressed her hand tenderly; waited for some time before he spoke; and then observed—"You are not likely, I suspect,

to return the compliment: for I have but just recovered of a tedious cough, which pulled me down all the winter; and I make no doubt I look hideous."

"What signifies beauty or plainness in a man?" said Caroline. Her lover made a face, as if he had seen any body cutting cork.

"What does it signify how a man looks?" said she.

"Nothing to you, I dare say, nor perhaps to me. But there are many men, I can promise you, who might not exactly relish that doctrine. Heigho! people, both male and female, think a great deal more of themselves than of any body else. However, if I am to dine here, I suppose 'tis pretty well time to go and dress."

"Are you tired of my company then?" said Caroline playfully, expecting a playful answer in return.

But he gravely replied, "Heaven forbid! only, as the wind smothered me with dust on my ride here, unless I put myself into some order, I shan't be fit to be seen."

Mrs. Cooksley gave them an exceedingly good dinner; and George Jeffery Trecothick ate of every dish but one, which, we believe, was a boiled chicken. At first he scarcely spoke; but after taking two or three glasses of wine (he highly praised the "Grave"), he began to hold forth about his travels; that is to say, about what he had most particularly attended to in his travels; and he expatiated so learnedly upon Fricandeux au jus, Fricandeaux à la Chicorée, Rognons au Vin de Champagne, Pieds de Cochon à la Sainte Menehould, &c. &c. &c. that one would have supposed, instead of three weeks, at the utmost, he had been sojourning in Paris for as many years.

He felt (the feeling is always a pleasant one) that he had done himself justice, and talked well upon this subject; and became excessively happy. He thought Caroline more attractive than ever; and although she did make a chance observation or two, which somewhat jarred with him, he attributed it to the heedlessness of

youth; a failing which she would get rid of, particularly with the example of that mother constantly before her. To Mrs. Cooksley he gave great credit indeed: for he had settled in his own mind, that, having taken the requisite pains to find out what would render her agreeable in society—she had, most meritoriously, succeeded in making herself so: which every body might do if they chose; and which every body ought to do;—but that the great mass of mankind were thinking only of themselves.

In such excellent temper was Mr. George Trecothick, and so well satisfied with the various comforts about him, that it was not until the ladies had retreated from the parlour, that he bethought him of having an hour or more to pass, tête-à-tête, with the old gentleman; whom he valued for being Caroline's father, and to whom he always took pains to be civil; but who came nearly up to his beau ideal of a bore.

Mr. Cooksley, however, spared him the

trouble of racking his brains for conversation. That worthy person's stories were unattended to, if not proscribed, in his own family; and now that he had got Trecothick bound, as it were, hand and foot, he determined to inflict upon him the remainder of the one which he had commenced in the forenoon. But, unluckily, he only remembered that it related to old Sam Twaddleton; and as he had no less than four (capital ones all) about him, he could not for his life hit upon the right one.

Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick was able to afford him no manner of aid: so, after knitting his brows, and puzzling for some time, he gave up the particular story about old Sam, which he could not recover, and told that of his cousin Dick Stote sending him an owl-pie; which did full as well, and lasted till tea-time.

In the evening, Mrs. Cooksley resumed her former judicious strain of conversation; and Mr. G. J. Trecothick decided (there could not, by the way, have been a less

educated person with any pretensions to be called a gentlewoman) that she was a very superior woman. Her husband's reign was now over: but being thoroughly good-humoured, he never sulked, because he might happen to be passed by in the family. On the contrary, he made the best of things at present, as upon all former occasions, and sat contented in his arm chair; sometimes looking at the face of his daughter beaming with pleasure, and sometimes at the book which he held in his own hand—a work on farriery; Merrick's, we believe, though some say Taplin's.

Caroline chattered, laughed, played, and sang; till her mother, apprehensive that the raptures of her swain were beginning to cool, proposed, with much discretion, that he should accompany her. Mr. Cooksley's violoncello was accordingly produced; and, after parrying a devilish good story, about that very bass, Mr. Trecothick sat down to perform. How he got through with it, we cannot undertake to say: Mrs.

Cooksley, most certainly, was incapable of judging whether he played well or ill; but she saw by his face when she ought to admire a passage, and that was enough for her.

As George had arranged things, however, for his return home that night; and he never liked to be put out of his way; the dismal moment at last arrived.

"Can it be half past ten already?" said Caroline.

"Nay, my dear," cried her mother, "you must recollect that old Mr. Trecothick has hardly spoken to his own son yet. 'Twas vastly kind in you, to be sure, Mr. George, to give us your very first day—of all things in the world! But you intended to make Caroline happy—and, Heaven knows, you've succeeded. She was more truly overjoyed to see you, than — — than — any one single thing I ever knew, in the whole course of my life."

"Miss Cooksley gave me indeed a flattering reception, Ma'am; but I scarcely

imagine that she could be so very much delighted to SEE me," said he, laughing as much, or rather as loudly, as if he had made the best possible joke; "for she thinks me grown very plain."

"No, no; I never actually said plain," cried Caroline; "there, you misunderstood me. I always said you had a good countenance, though there was but little variety in it: mamma has heard me say so a thousand times."

"No doubt I have, my dear," replied her mother; "plain, indeed!—of all imaginable things! I'm sure, whatever else she might say, she was never likely to say that — — of all other things in the world!"

A servant now announced that Mr. Trecothick's horse was ready.

"Good night, George," said Miss Cooksley.

"Good bye, dearest Caroline. I think myself fortunate in having found you so happy — — and so very lively too: indeed, it seems to me, that your spirits must

almost have affected your judgment! otherwise, you surely could not affirm that my countenance never varied: I know it is not a handsome one; I am a very ill-looking fellow; I know that well enough; but if my face has any thing, it has some variety of expression."

"Well, never mind," said she; "I dare say I was mistaken; but, at any rate, features and looks are not of the least importance in a man."

Mr. G. J. Trecothick's ride home was not altogether so pleasant (independently of the darkness) as his outward ride had been.

"I question," said he to himself, "whether I am entirely possessed of Caroline's heart. I know myself thoroughly; I am confident, that no man existing would be so ready to give up every inmost wish of his soul to the girl for whom he had an affection. But, at the same time, my feelings are peculiar in some points; and if I thought that she did not love me as well as

I love her, I should be the most miserable wretch upon earth."

In less than three weeks after this meeting between the lovers, Mr. Trecothick senior gave a dinner; at which were present, the Cooksley family, of course; two unmarried ladies, relations of the Trecothicks, brisk, sharp, talking women, both turned of thirty, some said, of thirty-six; a country gentleman of fortune, and some note, who had published a thick octavo on mendicity, and got credit by it; and a field officer of hussars, from the neighbouring barracks. But the phœnix of the day was a young nobleman, of Ireland, who had travelled much in the eastern parts of Europe; seen Ali Pacha in his own castle, and been inside the seraglio at Constantinople; who had also delivered a maiden speech in Parliament, which was highly extolled by his own party, and once or twice adverted to, by others, in the course of the debate. This young gentleman, Lord Kilkollops, eldest son of the Earl of Newton-Drumphoodle,

was by no means a greater coxcomb than many of his own age; nor did we ever hear of more than two very presumptuous conclusions, into which his vanity had led him. The one was, a notion, that every man whom he met in company, thought him witty and agreeable; and the other, that every woman who saw him, fell in love with him. His Lordship did not arrive until after the company had moved into the eating room, and indeed, till some of the ladies had been helped to their soup. But it was owing to no fault of his host that he appeared so late: for Mr. Trecothick would have waited on patiently, although the dinner had been spoiled in consequence, but for his son; who, having been used at all times to order matters as he thought fit, throughout the house, determined, in this instance, that they should wait no longer.

In which line of conduct, as it should seem, he was either influenced by a motive (and a proper one enough) of not sacri-

ficing the rest of the party to the caprice or inattention of one person, because he happened to be a man of rank — —; or perhaps, Mr. George, being accustomed to be considered as the first person himself, might be somewhat jealous of this young Lord, for possessing one advantage over him, to which he felt that he could never reasonably aspire.

The Viscount bowed into a room full of people, not one of whom (if we except the elder Mr. Trecothick) he had ever before set eyes on, with all the ease which might have been expected from a man who had lived in the best society, who sat in Parliament for a county, and had travelled in Albania and Greece. He delivered some hasty excuse for not being more punctual, founded on his postillion's mistake of the road, and their repeated narrow escapes of an overturn: in which lively statements truth was less considered, perhaps, than ludicrous and amusing effect. He then looked at his watch; asked what the dis-

tance really might be between Normanbury, the public place on the coast, from whence he came, and Mr. Trecothick's house at Wrexington; sat down, and ate of a variety of dishes, before he favoured a single individual present with any thing like minute notice.

At length, after drinking wine with his nearest neighbour, on whom, after a hasty glance in addressing her, he looked as little as he could help, during the ceremony: the Lord Kilkollops permitted his eyes to range freely round the table, and fixed them eventually upon Miss Caroline Cooksley—with an expression, which seemed to announce that he had discovered one, and but one, human being in the company.

Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick, who spoke to the Viscount less, and watched him more, than any body else, perceived this survey, and was not displeased with its effect. Caroline (thus he reasoned) was appropriated to himself; and every thing that belonged to him ought to be admired.

Now Caroline manifestly was admired. What should of necessity follow, therefore, but that he must be envied; envied by the only person in the room whose pretensions to superiority gave him the least uneasiness.

Meantime, his Lordship was also better satisfied than ever: he had met with an object, to whom it was not only worth his while to recommend himself just at present; but one who might be capable of furnishing him with occupation and amusement during his entire stay in that part of the country. He commenced operations, therefore, without a moment's delay; though not by talking directly across the table to Miss Cooksley; but, in the first instance, by taking all the conversation to himself, and shining to the utmost extent of his ability. He then, occasionally, addressed an observation to those who sat near her, on either side, but without saying a syllable to her; and when he discerned that she was surprised, if not offended, by this neglect (Miss Caroline having been used to her

full share of attention), he concluded, with high internal glee, that the train had begun to take fire.

"I do wish, that man would be pleased to remove his eyes from me," said Caroline to George Trecothick, who sat close by her upon the right; "I know of nothing so ill-bred, as the staring at people in that confident manner. He may have met with women who do not dislike such a liberty; but, to me, 'tis quite intolerable."

"Perhaps he cannot easily avoid it," returned young Trecothick, with a smile of infinite self-satisfaction: "perhaps he is more to be pitied than blamed. I can forgive him, Caroline, if you can."

"His tongue has been continually going; but what, on the face of the earth, has he been talking about?" said she.

"Faith," replied Mr. George, "that question is not so easily resolved. There seems to be very little in him."

"Something there is," said Miss Cooksley; "a most disgusting quantity of conceit."

While she was speaking, the ladies rose. Lord Kilkollops rushed to the door; and received from every person, but one, a most graceful inclination of the head, and a most gracious smile. Caroline neither smiled, curtsied, nor even once looked towards him; but swam out of the room, with just the sort of air to which it had been his purpose to bring her—an air of decided pique.

Things, somehow, went wrong with Miss Cooksley through the greater part of this evening. While the females were by themselves, she appeared to be—what her mother called, out of spirits; but every body else, out of humour: and when the gentlemen came in, her looks only varied, from silent and cross, to silent and contemptuous.

Mr. G. J. Trecothick, aware that the pleasure of talking to her was in his power whenever he chose to exert it, and always remembering that they were ENGAGED to each other—never came near her. This

young man felt a strong disposition to impress Mr. Crofft (the gentleman who had written a book, as before mentioned) with a favourable idea of his general knowledge, and superior turn of mind, to other youths of his own standing. In order to compass which end, he seized that respectable person by the button; talked to him about two very able articles, which Mr. Crofft was supposed to have contributed to a popular Magazine—one, on Early Hours; the other, on Beef-tea; and soon overwhelmed him with Paley, Adam Smith, Malthus, the nature of rent, the wages of labour, the manufacturer, the corn-grower, and the consumer.

Miss Caroline, meanwhile, was seated by the dragoon officer, Major Furness; to whose remarks she had inclined so cold an ear, that it was not long before he altogether ceased from troubling her with his conversation; and he addressed it, henceforward, to the person immediately on the further side of him, who chanced to be no

other than the Lord Kilkollops, eldest son of the Earl of Newton-Drumphoodle.

Caroline pretended to be thinking of any thing but their discourse: she averted her head from them; and was on the point of quitting her seat, with much show of disdain, and flouncing away to another part of the room—when she caught a word or two, expressed in a half whisper, by the viscount, which had the effect of inducing her to favour them with her whole attention, just at the moment when, by their bowing their heads close down together, they seemed disposed to be talking secrets.

She did not hear much, it is true; but she heard quite enough to relieve her from the feeling of flatness and insipidity, under which she had so long drooped, and to make the remainder of the evening as agreeable to her as the former part had been heavy.

She overheard the word "pretty" pronounced by Major Furness, in an accent of interrogation. And so plainly, as to prevent

all possibility of mistake,—the Viscount replied—"Very pretty; a charming girl, decidedly: but is she innocent, ignorant, or dull?—for I have not heard the sound of her voice since I came into the house."

The Major, soon after this, removed to another place. My Lord Kilkollops, however, steadily maintained his; as did Miss Caroline Cooksley hers—though with her back nearly turned to her neighbour: and, having possessed herself of a newspaper, at least three days old, which lay on the sopha near her—(the first time, we understand, that she had looked on any one of the public prints since the capture of Paris)—she began to read it most diligently.

His Lordship contemplated her, for some time, with a smile, the nature of which might have been collected from the curl of his lip, and the turn of his eye: but that expression was instantly dismissed, whenever Caroline took a half glance at him; and the smile on his countenance spoke nothing then but the language of pure admiration.

"Allow me, Miss Cooksley," said he, drawing a small table closer to them, on which were a couple of candlesticks, "to supply you with a little more light for your studies."

"Oh! no, no; I am not at all in want of it;" she replied, reddening, and tossing her head about: "I can see perfectly well, Sir, I thank you."

"I have long ceased to wonder," said Lord Kilkollops, "that all classes of men in this country, the artizans, the labourers, and even the beggars, are so good as to take the affairs of Government upon themselves. Politics, one may conceive, have a natural attraction for our sex;—but I remember the time, when a lady,—(a *young* lady, that is), would as soon have waded through the Journals of both Houses of Parliament, as have read a newspaper all through. This is an age, however, of universal information; and the light and frivolous subjects, on which our belles were formerly satisfied to converse, are now dis-

carded, or postponed, at least, till they shall have ascertained the fate of Europe."

"Ha, ha, ha! you have given yourself a great deal of trouble, my Lord, to explain all this; but, I fancy, you will find—— I believe—I—Ha, ha! I believe we read the papers, just—merely—just because we like it."

"That is the one of yesterday, in your hand, I presume."

"Yes—I suppose so; the one of yesterday, or the day before;—or Tuesday's perhaps:——Oh! I see now; 'tis Monday's."

"Then you are not altogether bitten by the general rage for mere news, I perceive; you like to balance probabilities, to consider the weight of evidence, and to make yourself mistress of the discussions upon it, before you give credit to any fact."

"Ha, ha!" said she, with a kind of nervous laugh, doubling the paper upon her lap, and folding it as carefully as if she had been making up a letter, "I just read

these things, my Lord—as——as the fit takes me."

"Were you not surprised at the event of Friday's debate?"

"I never read debates at all."

"In that, I think, you are quite right. To toil through the report of them in the papers, is certainly not the way to comprehend best the subject in question. Well, Miss Cooksley; and what is your opinion of the Allied Sovereigns' proclamation?"

"I never look at state-papers, or any thing of that kind."

"Right again," said he; "they are not to be trusted, undoubtedly. But I have caught you at last. Now I have found out, really, what you were so deep in:——as sure as we sit here, 'twas the account of Lady Acton's masquerade."

"Why, no; I am apt to skip the fashionable intelligence, and all that excessive silly nonsense."

"Will you give me leave, then, to ask, Miss Cooksley, what part of a paper it is that you do read?"

"What part? Oh—I just like to see how things are going on in the world, a little."

Here the Lord Kilkollops pulled out his handkerchief, and was long in blowing his nose——at least, he held the handkerchief before his face for a considerable time.

At this juncture, Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick, surprised at not hearing the tone of the Viscount's voice, which, till within the last ten minutes, had been pretty distinguishable, reconnoitered the whole room, and descried that nobleman in earnest converse with his own Caroline.

Nor was he, at first, by any means, disconcerted at the circumstance. It was a homage due to her beauty; and the first person in company (he considered) always ought to pay her particular civilities: but, at the same time, he knew not exactly how long the young senator had been sitting there; and too much of his conceited prate (Mr. George began to feel) would be a dreadful bore to Caroline. The man, more-

over, was such a coxcomb, that who could tell whether he might have the tact to leave off, when he had tormented her with as much attention as was becoming?

George continued to watch them; first with complacency, afterwards with impatience, and at last with disgust. He ceased talking to his friend, Mr. Crofft; he did not listen to one word which that right-headed man addressed to him in return; he silently cursed all statistics—and, from the extreme ill-humour of his countenance, might as well have done it audibly. At length, vexed beyond all endurance, he abruptly retreated into the next room, where he looked over a card-table, determining to evince fortitude and self-control; to let nobody see that he was annoyed; to wait there, patiently, till such time as, in common decency, the Lord Killkollops must have given over from pestering Caroline; and then, to requite her himself, by never quitting her side during the evening, and by joining with her in

abuse of this most forward, intruding personage.

In the card-room, therefore, we will leave him for the present; and return to Miss Cooksley, and my Lord Kilkollops, heir apparent to the Earl of Newton-Drumphoodle; whose conversation had been resumed, and had turned upon the sea-port town of Normanbury, which happened to be his Lordship's head-quarters in that part of the world, and from whence he had come over, by special invitation, to dine at Wrexington.

"Few people in the place," said his Lordship, "are much known to me. The main attractions which led me to Normanbury, were the charms of the surrounding country. You love beautiful scenery, Miss Cooksley, whether of the wild or more ornamented order. I am sure you do, and need not ask the question."

Caroline, in truth, cared very little about the matter; but she admitted the

imputation, and began, once more, to talk about the company at the watering-place.

"Your Lordship may have few acquaintance there; but you must have some, no doubt: and I hope, for your sake, that Miss St. Orme is among them."

"I have certainly the honour of being known to Miss St. Orme," said the Lord Kilkollops.

"And do you agree with the rest of the world, in admiring her beyond every thing?"

"I did."

"Yes; and you do still."

"I did—till VERY lately."

"Oh, you capricious, inconstant being —Till when?"

"Till this afternoon."

"Nonsense! Lord Kilkollops. Impossible!" said Miss Caroline, blushing, simpering, and twisting about, as she sat. "If so, I shall have a very mean opinion of your taste, I can tell you. Anna St. Orme is my particular friend: I had fifty times rather she was admired than——than any

relation of my own; and, I insist upon it, she is the flower of our county."

"Excuse me, Miss Cooksley; but, in that position——were I to be put to the torture, I never could concur."

To this speech he had the impudence to add a bow; which Caroline no otherwise acknowledged than by a slight laugh, and the sparkling of her eyes.

"I am surprised," said she, playing nervously, and somewhat vehemently, with her fan, of which two sticks were already broken—"that people, with a fine place of their own, like the St. Ormes, should choose to live, for half a year together, in those vile lodgings at Normanbury."

"As for parks, and great houses," replied the Viscount, "they may be mighty dull concerns, as I am old enough to have often experienced. The whole turns upon the society at them: and, indeed, with such as St. Mary Ormsbury can afford—— I should hold that man a dolt, an idiot,

and a very brute, who could think of preferring——"

"St. Mary Ottley"—cried Caroline: "but I beg pardon; you might not have meant our place."

"Ottley, I said, as plain as I could speak," replied his Lordship, with appearance of warmth; "and I say again, and should repeat, before the whole world—that, not only would the delight and advantage of being resident at St. Mary Ottery prevent a man, of any taste or discernment, from roaming to watering places; but even the good fortune of living in the neighbourhood—as near to it, for instance, as this house, would, to me—— However, these are topics on which one must not trust oneself."

"Oh! I am sure, my Lord, if papa thought that you admired the situation of our house—and every body says, it is greatly improved since he cut down the trees beyond the head of water, and let in the view of Sparling tower——I am

sure, my Lord, if papa knew *that*, he would be proud at all times——that, I may undertake to——I——I——I think, we have a pleasant party here to-day."

"A very cheerful party, Miss Cooksley. I dare say they are all very happy. This, at least, I know, that *one* of them has good reason to be so."

Here she turned away, drew herself up, and fixed her eyes upon the top of the window-curtains; and his Lordship began to suspect that he might have gone too far: but, if he felt himself at all daunted, he was quickly re-emboldened by the lady's reply.

"I am not aware," she said, "why any one individual should be happier than the rest."

"This, at any rate, I shall take the liberty of affirming," resumed the Lord Kilkollops, "that there is only one of the company whom I find myself disposed to envy!"

Those words were no sooner out of his

mouth, than the young lady, partially averting her face, again appeared to be contemplating the cornice.

Precisely at the moment when my Lord Kilkollops commenced his last observation, Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick emerged from the card-room, and beheld the Viscount still in possession of his own faithful Caroline's undivided attention. He fretted audibly; he bit his lip with vexation; and put on a look of as much rage and distress, as his full, pink, unmeaning cheeks would allow him to assume.

The company now broke up. Lord Kilkollops, after receiving Miss Cooksley's permission to wait upon her father, in order that he might see the house and grounds which had so particularly struck his fancy, set off for Normanbury.

The Cooksley carriage was at the door; and Caroline had got her cloak on before Mr. G. J. Trecothick vouchsafed to favour her with one single word. Just at last, however, he did approach her, more in

sorrow than in rapture, and more in spleen than either.

"Considering how much that man's looks only were disagreeable to you at dinner, Caroline, I think you have endured them, with wonderful fortitude, all through the evening: and not merely his looks, Ma'am—but his pert, forward, flippant, self-sufficient, shallow conversation, into the bargain."

"Indeed, you are perfectly right, George," said she; "he is but an empty kind of person, it must be confessed. Lively, and perhaps amusing; but, as you say, shallow to a degree. And yet, what could one do? Though he must have seen that I was worn to death by it, he would address all his attentions to me, and speak to no other individual in the room."

"Pooh, pooh! Pish! You are now making him out to have been behaving particularly and improperly, when he was only behaving absurdly. My dear Miss Cooksley, permit me to say, that you have

not as yet mixed enough in the world to judge of these things. Men—especially vain men—always set their wit at the youngest girl in company — — such wit as as it is! I have seen many puppies in my life; but never such a confident puppy as this; without any one pretension, from knowledge, or talents, or person — — you think him very plain, surely?"

"Frightful, till he begins to talk; but what signifies beauty in a man! and when he does begin — —"

"Caroline, my love—we have been waiting for you these ten minutes;" cried Mrs. Cooksley, from the other end of the room.

"And when he does — — what then, Caroline?" continued George Trecothick, determining to get an answer, and detaining her by force.

"What then? O, then — — why, in my opinion, his countenance improves. As he becomes interested in the conversation, it varies and brightens agreeably enough."

"It VARIES, does it?" said the gentleman, loosening his hold, and lengthening his own face most portentously—"Miss Caroline Cooksley, I have the honour of wishing you a very good night."

Caroline, after she had got into the coach, endeavoured to recollect what could possibly have made her own dearest George Jeffery Trecothick so horribly out of temper; nor was she long before she hit it off: and, for a minute or two, she felt rather sorry at having said, incautiously, that the countenance of the Lord Kilkollops had any variety of expression. But we are constrained to admit, that she did not evince, upon this occasion, what Mr. George Trecothick himself would have called a "good heart."

Because some trifling circumstances, not unconnected, we fear, with the passion of vanity, happened to have gratified her during the night—the visible discomposure and chagrin of her fond lover had but a very slight effect upon Miss Caroline; and

the truth seems to be, that she rose, in the course of the drive home, into inordinate spirits. Twice, at nothing on the face of the earth, did she burst into a violent fit of laughter; to both her parents she was all kindness and condescension, and she charmed them in the highest degree. Mrs. Cooksley, indeed, had been so thoroughly pleased by the proceedings of the day, that, contrary to her usual habit, she gave her husband some sort of encouragement to converse; and, instead of retiring immediately after her daughter, she talked over the dinner party with Mr. Cooksley, in an exceedingly pleasant, becoming, and affable manner.—"And every body, I will say," she observed, after they had gone on for some time upon the same subject, "seemed to be satisfied, and at their ease, and well entertained."

"Every body, my dear," said her husband, "except George Trecothick: and he —why I can't conceive—was as sulky as a bear."

"George Trecothick, Mr. Cooksley, is

a young man of great merit, and we are uncommonly fond of him. But George has his faults, like the rest of us; and one of them is, that he thinks a little too perpetually about himself. He must bear to see the person to whom he is attached—(well; yes,—yes,—engaged, if you will)—he must endure, I say, to see her speak to other people now and then. Indeed, if he is to marry our Caroline—he must make up his mind to find her an object of consideration every where. These are not the times, Mr. Cooksley,—(of all things in the universe!) for tyrannizing over wives, and confining them under ground, like people in story-books, to be discovered some time or other by their grand-children, all as thin as so many skeletons! Women, now-a-days, are allowed to play their part in society; and what's more, they will play it; and though they may not talk away just like the men—in nine cases out of ten, perhaps, they could talk a great deal better. Not that I mean at present to make any re-

flexions upon you—of all other things!—for, I must say, that, this evening, you took no more than your own share in the conversation; instead of running on with a parcel of long prosy stuff, like Sir Mark Hogshaw."

"Prosy, my dear, you may say, with a vengeance: for, though he can never keep his tongue still for half a second together—he has but one story worth telling, amongst his whole stock — — Peter Pummery and the ducks. That's a tolerable good one, certainly; but you must have heard it a hundred times—"

"And I do beg, Mr. Cooksley, that I may not hear it now, for the hundred and first," said the lady; and betook herself to bed forthwith.

Hitherto, we hope, this little history has gone on smoothly enough; and by the word "smoothly," let it be understood, that we do not mean "amusingly." That would be too much to assume. We only use the expression "smoothly" in this re-

spect: there has been no introduction of universally depraved and abandoned villains; no shocking incidents; no poisoning; no assassination; no forged deeds and wills; not even a house-breaking; in short, no such striking facts and strongly marked characters, as are frequently met with in narratives of this class. The people, in general, have been more peevish than malignant, and more silly than hard-hearted. But, from this point, a certain degree of alteration must take place: for although we, ourselves, have become as deeply in love with Caroline as authors usually are with their heroines, we are still more in love with truth; and she compels us to announce, that, for a whole month, at the least, after this dinner at Wrexington, Miss Cooksley made that deserving young man George Jeffery Trecothick very seriously unhappy.

The eldest son and heir apparent of the Earl of Newton-Drumphoodle lost no time in waiting upon the Cooksley family, at St.

Mary Ottley. He was in raptures with the house, the place, the prospect, and the inhabitants; and they were in equal raptures with him. He was invited; solicited, and pressed to repeat his visits; and having promised to do so, he kept his word faithfully, and frequently. When there, he listened to the father's good stories; he suffered himself, in appearance, to be imposed upon by the little low cunning contrivances of the mother: and he flattered Miss Caroline—to her face, with considerable effect, and behind her back with a great deal more. In point of fact, for we can conceal it no longer, such a flirtation was established between them, that the whole neighbourhood whispered, wondered, laughed, and were scandalized at her conduct:—she too; a young woman known to have entered into another engagement.

Honest Mr. Cooksley was the first of his family to be alarmed at the turn which things were taking; and after consulting upon it repeatedly, in a confidential way,

with the butler, he did at last venture to address his wife and daughter upon the subject one morning, at breakfast time. He then suggested to them, and pretty roundly, when he found himself permitted to go on without interruption,—that if Caroline continued to be so particular with this Lord Kil — — (the rest of the name he had forgotten)—as he could not but think, she had allowed herself to be of late —Mr. George Trecothick would, in his humble judgment, have a great deal justly to complain of. That he concluded his daughter and that young man to have been as good as bound in contract to each other; that he desired to be told whether it was so or not; for that, for his part, he should prefer the alliance of a near neighbour, and a country gentleman of good fortune, though a commoner, to any slip of Irish nobility whatever—be he Earl, or even Duke.

But this tone, however it might have become him, he was totally unable to sup-

port. Miss Caroline, when he had done speaking, stared at him for some moments in utter amazement; and then, bursting into tears, declared—she saw but too plainly, that at the time when she most stood in need of every tenderness, her father had withdrawn all his affection from her. While Mrs. Cooksley asked, sternly and imperiously,—whether, because human laws might have given an arbitrary parent undue power over the happiness of his child—he really thought, that daughters were sent into the world, by Providence, merely to be made the lowest and most degraded of slaves? The poor man had no answer ready for this tremendous interrogatory; but withdrew, consoled, if any consolation was at hand for him—by feeling that he had attempted to do his duty, however ineffectually.

Meantime, the Trecothicks, as may be supposed, were not slow of hearing all that had been going on at St. Mary Ottley: and Mr. George would have come to a

downright breach with his own father (who indulged him, with at least as much folly, as the other family were in the habits of humouring their daughter)—if the old gentleman could have been driven to one, by his pettishness, fractiousness, and ill behaviour. George Jeffery Trecothick was ready to quarrel with every body in the house, but himself. He upbraided his father most unreasonably and ungratefully. He declared and vowed that he never would speak again to any one of the Cooksley family, even to their remotest connexions. He vented the most cutting reproaches upon Caroline; and furious abuse, mingled with terms of unqualified contempt, upon the Viscount Kilkollops. As for the latter, he said, he should know what to do with him; and of such a nature were his vindictive threats, that had not old Mr. Trecothick understood his son tolerably well upon some points—his life might have been embittered by hourly apprehension of a bloody and fatal catastrophe.

Tired at length, and, it may be hoped, ashamed of worrying his weak and fond parent, Mr. G. J. Trecothick thought fit to retreat to his own room entirely; he announced himself to be ill; perhaps thought himself so; refused to come down to meals; but took broth (and many other things by the way) in his own apartment; and complained, that although every one knew the cause of his affliction, not a soul would stir a finger to relieve him. In fact, whatever mixed motives his distress might arise from, very greatly distressed he now undoubtedly was. Wounded pride, jealousy, mortification, all racked him; and the idea of losing any thing which once was to have been HIS, could not be endured. Besides which, though, when he had formerly considered himself to be sure of Caroline, he was comparatively careless about her; he now thought of her with a sort of admiration, which stung him to the very soul; and he persuaded himself,—probably he might really feel,—that he

never had known before, how desperately he was in love with her. Every fresh report from St. Mary Ottley, only served to prepare the way more and more for the triumph of his detestable rival; and the question no longer was, which of Mr. George Trecothick's passions should be gratified the first; but whether any of the most violent would be gratified at all. There seemed to be no opportunity for the exertion of any one, now, but his pride. The vantage afforded for that he therefore eagerly seized upon; and resolving, that if matters between him and Miss Cooksley were to be broken off—he would, at all events, have the satisfaction of first striking a decisive blow — — he prepared an epistle over night; retouched it more than once next morning; and intrusted it to a servant, to be conveyed to St. Mary Ottley. But, while the servant was on his way, a dialogue took place between Mrs. Cooksley and her daughter, which, as it had some influence upon the younger lady's reply to the note of Mr.

George Jeffery Trecothick, we should not hold ourselves justified in suppressing.

"My sweetest Caroline," said her mother, making her appearance rather unexpectedly, and with an ominous countenance, in Miss Cooksley's room; "you have long been diverting yourself with this silly young man; you have been amusing yourself at the expense of this foolish Lord — — what's his name; and I think you had a very good right so to do. But, if I had not been confident that you had too much sense to believe — that is — — to — to — — that is, I mean — to take any thing that he said in a serious light, even for a moment; I should never have left you so much together, I can promise you."

"What now," said Caroline, laying down her work, and looking at her mother with a mixed expression of anger and alarm: "what is the meaning of all this, mamma?"

"My sweet love, think of him no more: he is only worthy of your contempt and disdain. He, a Lord! He may be a

Lord; but he's no gentleman! that I will undertake to say. He is beneath your notice, my love; and it does my heart good to see that you think so too. A conceited ape!—to take and write that cold easy letter to your father—just mentioning, as if 'twas all a thing of course, that he could not dine here to-morrow, because he was obliged to set off, directly, for London, on his Parliamentary duties —— and that, having no thoughts—(a mean despicable puppy)—of returning to Normanbury, he desired to make his acknowledgments for all our civilities; and hoped (of all the impudence that ever was heard of in the world!) that we should meet hereafter —— somewhere or other — of all imaginable things in nature! And yet, this empty coxcomb was the person, whom some of our kind neighbours thought proper to say, you had preferred to that amiable, constant, respectable young man, George Trecothick."

"Now mamma," returned Miss Cooks-

ley, "this is positively too bad. This is deceitful of you—this is dishonest, I do solemnly declare. When in spite of poor papa's warnings, remonstrances, and entreaties, you would persist in advising me to give him every possible encouragement; when — —"

"My dearest, let me beseech you to restrain your feelings," cried her mother: "unless you wish to break my heart outright—Do not talk in that very shrill tone of voice."

"You said," replied Caroline, sobbing with indignation, "that I was to have a title NOW; and that after — — after—his father's death, I should be a Countess. You did, I'm sure, mamma:—Countess of Newton-Drumphoodle." Here her voice, which had been faltering, failed altogether; and the tears burst from her eyes.

"My sweetest child," said Mrs. Cooksley, "be patient. Have patience, love—if 'tis only for one minute. Just listen to me, my Caroline — —." They were now inter-

rupted by a tap at the chamber door; and Miss Cooksley's maid brought in the note which had just arrived from Wrexington.

Caroline surveyed it with a glance of cool disregard; and, twisting her little head about, somewhat scornfully, broke the seal, and possessed herself of the following communication:

"There was a time when Mr. George J. Trecothick would have addressed Miss Cooksley in the first person; but, in their present relative situations, he no longer allows himself to take that liberty. He, therefore, presents his compliments to Miss C.; and begs leave to inform her, that he hopes nothing, to which he (Mr. G. J. T.) has ever been a party, will impose the slightest restraint upon Miss C. As to any circumstances which may have occurred at St. Mary Ottley, since he had last the honour of seeing Miss C.—he (Mr. G. J. T.) begs to observe, that he neither knows, nor wishes to know, nor would know if he could, nor ever will know—any thing what-

ever concerning them. He only takes the liberty to repeat, that, if Miss C. should conceive herself to be bound in honour by any former proceeding in which he may have been concerned—she is, from henceforward, PERFECTLY FREE. She may have reasons for wishing to be so, or she may not; but he makes bold to add, that, should she (Miss C.) have any such reasons—he (Mr. G. J. T.) will be the last man upon earth to be hurt at them, to inquire into them, or to feel the least curiosity about them."

"Here is a pretty impertinent performance for you!" said Caroline, after she had perused this dignified epistle. "What do you think of it, mamma?"

"What do YOU, my love?" replied her mother, when she had seen the letter, in her turn.

"I shall treat both it and the writer with the most ineffable contempt."

"Now, there, Caroline, I must be per-

mitted to say, you are wrong. This young man, if you will but consider the matter coolly, has something, perhaps, to urge against——against—us; of which, indeed, you are as well aware as I am. But, by good fortune, no harm has yet happened, which may not be set right without difficulty. And I must tell you, flatly and fairly, that, if you should now break with George Trecothick, and throw away such an excellent match—you might be reduced to marry below your just pretensions,—or, possibly, not be married at all, till you are near thirty!"

"Till when?" cried Caroline, with a shriek of dismay.

The expression was certainly a strong one; but, having pronounced it, Mrs. Cooksley resolved she would stand to it.

"Till near thirty, my love," she replied, mildly, but firmly.

This hypothetical case had its due weight with the fair Caroline. She became more tractable; heard reason; and, with the aid of her mother, who supplied most of the

materials, while the younger lady put them into shape, a proper note was got up between them, and dispatched, without delay, to her injured, unhappy swain.

It ran to this effect:

"MY DEAR GEORGE,

"Many people in my place, as you must be conscious, would be hurt at the style and language of yours just received. But since I not only feel, but am ready to confess, that I have been behaving foolishly——(you have often warned me, you know, against the being run away with by my naturally high spirits, and the rage I have for forming new acquaintance)—— I shall offer no observations upon the coldness of your expressions, or ask for an explanation of their exact purport—which, indeed, at present, I am far from comprehending. To be sincere, however, I suppose you allude to the intimate footing on which I have lately been with the person who chose to introduce himself to me, that

night, at Wrexington —— I mean, Lord Kilkollops. And here, George, I must say, that I have, in my turn, some reason to be offended with you. It might be bad taste to form such an acquaintance at all—— But how any body—how you, in particular, could, for a moment, imagine, that I was listening, SERIOUSLY, to the falsehood, the adulation, the vapouring, the egotism, and, in short, to the abominable folly, of so conceited and contemptible a being as that— does excite my astonishment, I own. In my intimacy with him, I may have been indiscreet; but, having told you again and again, that I never would marry any man, be his condition what it might, who had not congenial ideas with my own, I do, upon that point, expect to be believed. At any rate, I am in earnest now, Sir; as a proof of which, I am ready to pledge my word of honour, that, if you should require it, I will forego, for the rest of my life, even any common acquaintance with that person—notwithstanding his having stated, in the strongest terms, his desire for the con-

tinuation of our intimacy. After saying thus much, you will proceed as you please; but I conclude, and shall go so far as to add, I hope—that you will be thoroughly satisfied. Believe me, my dear friend (for friends, I trust, we shall be in every event),

"Yours, with a true regard,

C. C."

(P. S.) "I thought it best to show this to mamma, before I folded it up; and she entirely approves of it. But the Postscript nobody shall see but ourselves. 'Tis possible that, for some reason or other,—perhaps, on account of his rank,—papa may still encourage this man to visit at our house: but, I solemnly protest to you, that I hope not. I am tired of him beyond what language can express: his conversation is flimsiness itself; nor has his countenance, by any means, that character of variety which I once supposed, and which alone could make it endurable for an instant."

We should excessively like, if our limits permitted, to go on, for just eighteen pages from this place, in describing the comfort, the relief, the rapture, which this letter imparted to poor George Jeffery Trecothick. He came down to dinner that day, and cheered the heart of his truly affectionate father, by eating, in the first course, of every thing upon the table, without one exception; and five plover's eggs, besides pastry, in the second.

The next meeting between the lovers was quite beautiful. Caroline received him with an arch timidity; and treated him, sometimes playfully, sometimes endearingly, and sometimes with—what he considered as an honest, affectionate frankness: while her mother sat by, charmed with every circumstance belonging to the reconciliation of this interesting young couple; and called herself a fool for crying, when nothing was wanting to complete her felicity.

The next time that Mr. George Treco-

thick chanced to see Mrs. Cooksley alone he entertained her with so warm and eloquent a panegyric upon Miss Caroline, as drew forth an abundant return in kind, under the name of a confession, extorted from her, of her daughter's inmost heart; and she concluded, by throwing out a hint, that, so deeply attached as they both were, it was almost a pity they should be obliged to wait.

Mr. G. J. Trecothick not appearing immediately to understand her drift, she made the intimation yet plainer; and said, that it was almost a pity they should be forced to wait to be married till he came of age.

Then, to be sure, he acquiesced; but not, *exactly*, with the eagerness which the good lady had expected. He declared, however, that he would speak to his father upon the subject; and he did speak to him. But the old gentleman still expressed himself as somewhat averse to the measure; urging, that since his son would be twenty-one in less than six months, he could see no necessity for precipitating things;

and Mr. George, very dutifully, agreed with him; having considered (so we hope, at least), that, as his father had given way to him in, perhaps, all his former wishes—it did not become him to press this. At the same time, there were certainly others who thought that the young Squire was in no such violent hurry to be actually married; that he much delighted in courtship, and its incidents; and that the feeling certain of Caroline, and the having so fine a girl pointed out in all companies, as something devoted to him—would do very well for six months to come.

Meantime, they went on delightfully together: each understood the other better than before; and they mutually avoided all tender ground; Mr. George being laudably careful not to betray that he habitually thought more of himself than of her—and Caroline taking due care, on her side, not to commend the face of any body else for possessing a variety of expression; nor,

above all, to reflect upon his for the want of it.

In the midst of this happiness, too exquisite not to be liable to interruption, Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick was called away from his home, from his silly admiring father, from his eternal expeditions to St. Mary Ottley, from his philanderings, and from his Caroline, by some particular business, which obliged him to repair, for two months, to London.

On the day before he left Wrexington, George rode over to Normanbury, a public place on the coast, which has more than once been spoken of in the course of these transactions; and, having there overtaken the Cooksley's carriage, he persuaded the ladies to get out; and, while the mother was engaged elsewhere, he disported himself upon a walk between the houses and the sea, which they called the Parade, with his own Caroline hanging by his arm. Before they had taken above three or four turns, they met two young men, one of

whom bowed both to Miss Cooksley and her lover; and the other, standing still, with a smile on his countenance, and his right hand extended, seemed desirous of accosting Mr. G. J. Trecothick—but to feel doubtful of his reception. Nor, in truth, could any thing be less gracious than that reception proved.

"Good day, Major Furness," said Trecothick, hastily, to one of them; and, turning from the other man, with a most supercilious air, he walked straight on, dragging his fair one along with him.

"You mistook that gentleman, did you not," said Major Furness, after they had passed by, "for some acquaintance of your own?"

"Not a bit of it: there was no mistake in the case. He is, or was, an old friend of mine; and has cut me, with a sort of insolence, that, upon my soul! I am not used to——because we had some trifling dispute, while we were travelling in France together, and parted company in conse-

quence. I have long known the fellow; and was glad to give him an opportunity of making up our foolish quarrel; but, you see how he treats me. I have a devilish good mind to follow him, this very minute; and kick him up and down the Parade, in sight of all Normanbury, and before the girl he is walking with. Who is she? By Jupiter, she's a fine creature! Too pretty a hell of a deal, to be holding by such a hound as that."

"She will hold by him for life soon, I can tell you," replied Major Furness: "her name is Cooksley. An old attachment between them, I fancy—or something. They're engaged, I've a notion. It was supposed to be off a little while ago; but Bessy Truss says, it's now on again."

"Miss Cooksley? You don't say so! —Oho! I heard something of all that when we were at Cambridge. Hang me, if I won't be even with that reptile; I'll be revenged on him—and I begin to see how."

"Surely, Slatterbrain, you have not

the vanity to imagine that you can induce her to break her word with young Trecothick!"

"Perhaps not. But I never yet saw the girl whom I could not bring to—a particularity of behaviour——to a decided flirting connection; and that will do for me, my man! I know the sore, sensitive, morbid, miserable, jealous nature, of Master George Trecothick; and a favourable reception alone would be sufficient for my purpose. But, if any thing more was wanted—I do not see, altogether, why one should despair. We won't talk of person, on either side; but, setting apart vows and promises—my prospects in life are just as fair as his. You know for whom I am now in mourning! My uncle, Sir Cæsar Slatterbrain's only son—aye, and what's more, his only child. So, I stand next on the list; and the devil's in it, if the main estate of our family isn't as good as any thing likely to fall to the Trecothick whelp! Don't you see that—old Hercules of Furnese?"

The Major confessed, that there might be something in his last observation; but still doubted whether matters had not been carried too far between these lovers, to admit of any successful attack upon the lady's faith. He agreed, however, that it would be monstrous good fun to make the experiment; and owned, that there was a sense of self-interest, and a close, disgusting pride, about George Jeffery Trecothick, which he should have no great objection to assist in mortifying. They accordingly set to work; and began their operations that very morning, after Trecothick had gone home, leaving his charmer in the town, under her mother's care, for the purpose of shopping. Mr. Slatterbrain contrived to meet the ladies five times within a quarter of an hour, either in the streets, or on the Parade; and, each time, he looked full at Caroline, with an expression, changing from a kind of humble and distant delight, *to a* degree, to an ecstacy of admiration, which he could scarcely keep within bounds.

"Who is that young man?" said Mrs. Cooksley; "he must be dodging and following us on purpose. Did you ever see him before, my dear?"

"Never, mamma; unless he is the same person who was walking with Major Furness, a while ago; but that, I can not be positive about—for I didn't look at him once."

"He stares at you," observed her mother, as much as is consistent with good breeding, I think."

"Vastly unpleasant!" said Caroline.

Having finished their business, they took a turn upon the sands; and ordered the carriage to meet them a little beyond a remarkably bold cliff, the brow of which jutted out over the base, in a striking and rather terrific manner.

After stopping for some time at the foot of this cliff, and looking out at the fishermen's craft, upon the placid sea—Mrs. Cooksley cast her eyes upwards; jogged Caroline; and they both discerned (on the

extreme verge of the precipice) Mr. Slatterbrain, standing nobly upright, and in a picturesque attitude; with his right hand upon his heart; his left shading his forehead, and his eyes so intently fixed upon some object below, that he seemed in danger every moment of falling from the height, and being dashed to pieces at Miss Caroline's feet.

"I do believe 'tis the same man—— of all things in nature!" said Mrs. Cooksley.

"No"—said her daughter; "no; I should rather think not."

"It is, I vow," cried Mrs. Cooksley. "He is certainly smitten, my love; and has been keeping pace with our walk—(of all other things!)—along the top of the cliffs."

"Vastly disagreeable," said Miss Caroline.

At this instant Major Furness joined them, and inquired whether they had seen his friend within the last half hour.

"I really took no notice of the gentle-

man," replied Miss Cooksley. "But there was somebody like — — I mean—there was some person or other on the top of that rock, just this minute—"

"True, true," said the Major, looking upward: "poor Slatterbrain! He ought not to venture, in his present state of mind, upon those dangerous places."

"I do suppose, Major Furness," observed the mother, "that if we have met him once since we last saw you, we must have met him three-and-fifty times! and he stares so at my daughter, that 'tis quite distressing."

"Doubtless, the gentleman takes me for somebody else," said Caroline.

The Major shook his head, with an incredulous smile. "To tell you the truth, Miss Cooksley, I am almost afraid you will be pestered in the same way as long as you remain at Normanbury. Poor Slatterbrain! he yields to first impressions more fatally than any man I ever knew in my life; and yet he has such a heart, and so much feel-

ing—that those who are intimate with him are always the most ready to excuse his eccentricities. He is only obtrusive—I will say that for him—where the most ungovernable passion of our nature is concerned."

"What are his connexions?" said Mrs. Cooksley.

"Why, Ma'am, his connexions are good;—indeed, we may say, great. So that his friends, aware of the impetuous ardour and romantic tenderness of his disposition, would be particularly glad to see him well married and settled. He is next heir to an old uncle (you must understand), Sir Cæsar Slatterbrain, a man above seventy; and will succeed, beyond question, now, to the baronetage."

"Any fortune to support it?" said Mrs. Cooksley.

"Yes, Ma'am; yes: very fair, as to the point of fortune: from eleven to fifteen thousand a year, perhaps."

"Whew! Major! you talk grandly of

these matters. Fifteen thousand a-year — of all other imaginable things on the face of the earth!"

"'Twould be too great a liberty, I fear, to request permission — — to — request the honour of introducing him to your acquaintance?" said Major Furness, addressing himself in rather a marked manner to Caroline.

"I believe, Sir, the gentleman has no great wish for it," replied Miss Cooksley; "for he seems to me to have left the cliffs."

"Unlucky enough," said the Major; "poor fellow! I see how it is—gone home in despair. But another time, might I venture?"

"Any friend of yours, Major Furness, at all times," said the mother, as he handed her into the carriage.

In less than a week after this, Mr. Cooksley came into Normanbury; and the Major, having espied him from one of the public libraries, sent off a special messenger for his friend Slatterbrain; and kept the

old gentleman in sight till he arrived. They then contrived to meet him—by accident; the introduction took place; and Mr. Slatterbrain happening (as good luck would have it) to speak of greyhounds—Mr. Cooksley entered warmly upon the topic, and affirmed, that he had the best breed in the country. He mentioned, indeed, one or two Squires who had the presumption to vie with him; but left it to Major Furness to say which of the party had the best title to boast. That officer gave a solemn judgment in his favour; and both he and his friend so well managed matters throughout the conversation which ensued, that they entirely won Mr. Cooksley's heart.

He told them three stories—(how connected with greyhounds we know not)—about a certain Mr. Twaddleton, with whom he seemed to have once lived in habits of some intimacy—-but who was generally described (he said) by the more familiar appellation of Sam Twaddleton only: and,

in conclusion, he invited them to come over and see his dogs, at St. Mary Ottley. The invitation was gratefully accepted, and punctually kept; and was succeeded by another, of a more flattering nature to Mr. Slatterbrain—in virtue of which he established his residence at the house for a fortnight together: Mrs. Cooksley saying, that his conversation took her more out of herself than that of any one else whom she had ever known:—and her daughter—that it was too late now; but if she must speak the truth—she had never, hitherto, met with a man whose ideas, upon every subject, were so congenial with her own.

Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick, all this time, was enjoying himself in the metropolis: that is to say, enjoying himself with discretion and moderation, after he had attended to the business which brought him there. It related to money matters; and he was not such an ass (according to a frequent boast of his) as to neglect them,

however common such folly might be among the young men of the day.

His father was in the practice of intrusting every thing to George; and a doubt, it seems had arisen—whether they should avail themselves of a clause in a certain covenant, which would have the effect of giving the person who rented one of their estates a much harder bargain than had been in the contemplation of either party, at the commencement of the transaction. Now, upon this affair, Mr. G. J. Trecothick, youthful as he was, reasoned very sensibly indeed. He desired to know first, whether the law—*for certain*—gave them the right in question. Because, if not—he said, very honourably and becomingly, that he never would stir a finger in the business. But, otherwise,—he had no notion, he was free to confess, of abandoning any advantage which the law fairly allowed them: and his attorney—though with more hesitation, it is but justice to say—inclined to the same opinion.

After the more important work of the day had thus been conducted with prudence and diligence; Mr. George J. Trecothick took his pleasures—his rational and allowable pleasures we mean—in the evenings. Not that he delighted in parties or dancing, music or cards; but he went nevertheless to assemblies sometimes, especially when he had an invitation from any body of rank or consequence. And very right he was, to be sure: theirs are always the best parties; to have been seen at them was a distinction; besides, it had a tendency to keep up a permanently respectable acquaintance. On such occasions, therefore, he put a laudable constraint upon himself.

The affairs, however, which he had on his hands, kept him longer in town than had originally been contemplated; and, for some weeks, the letters of his own true, faithful, lovely Caroline, preserved an even pace with his replies; and were got up in such terms of extravagant fondness, as, to some people—even lovers—might almost

have had a sickening effect. But for Mr. George Jeffery Trecothick there was not a word too much: he was disposed, indeed, to carp at her frequent repetition of the same expressions, but by no means at her warmth; and it gave him pleasure to compose the most delicate, witty, and masterly replies—for, as such, he had no doubt, his letters were spoken of by her, and by all who heard them.

One evening, on his return home, after a dinner party—having no particular engagement for that night, he sat down to write to his beloved: and it then came across his mind, with something of a chilling sensation, that he was about to do so before she had answered his last.

He wished it might prove otherwise; and gave the matter a fair consideration: but he was not to deceive himself, either; and such was certainly the fact. "Humph!" said he to himself; "I don't quite like this. Nobody living, I will venture to say, stands less upon punctilio than myself, or indeed

requires so little attention. But in delaying her answers, under our peculiar circumstances, there is a want of proper feeling, as it strikes me. I promised, without doubt, never more to mention her behaviour on ONE occasion;—but I never promised not to think of it; or, if I did — — with such a heart, and such affections as mine—'tis impossible to keep my promise: and, I must say, that her expecting me to write her two letters for one, is — — is—counting more upon a blind attachment on my part, than one altogether likes."

He finished, however, and sent his letter next day: but received no answer by return of post, which literally took away his appetite; and he made (for him) a most miserable dinner. Still, fortunately, his sleep was not disturbed: for, before he went to bed, he had not only invented a tolerable excuse for her omissions; but had arranged in his mind some tender reproofs, to be inserted in his next; the more cutting in reality, the more they were expressed

with mildness, temper, and dignity. And he likewise decided, to complete his consolation, that though no letters came into town on the following day, he should, to a certainty, have one by the post on Monday. Monday arrived; but no communication from Miss Caroline Cooksley. The poor youth was really beside himself, with fretfulness and vexation; he took on (as they call it) till he nearly made himself ill; and resolved, as he lay awake in the dead of night, that he would instantly write to St. Mary Ottley, and break off at once all connexion between them. Next day, however, he relented; or rather failed in resolution; for, whenever the least chance occurred of his actually losing Caroline, he then was sure to feel very deeply, seriously, and anxiously attached to her. So he thought that it became him, as a philosopher, to give her one day more, for repentance and reparation. Alas! he was ill rewarded for his magnanimity. The post came in; the mail horn sung forth as glo-

riously as if every bag had been stuffed to the very mouth with the effusions of his penitent love: the belted servant of the office, in a new red coat, tripped it briskly along the pavement; gave his two raps at George Trecothick's lodgings, with a smartness and confidence which seemed expressly designed to insult him; and delivered in— one letter only, from his affectionate father. That unhappy gentleman wrote as if he had been frightened out of his wits: he deprecated his son's wrath, and protested that he would have given him a hint long ago, but for the hopes, to which he had constantly clung, that the reports of the neighbourhood might be foolish and exaggerated, or false and malicious. But, in conclusion, he admitted—almost without the effort, most assuredly, without the power of softening any one material circumstance, that a certain Mr. Slatterbrain had been absolutely domesticated at St. Mary Ottley for the last three weeks and more. And it was affirmed by many, and he *now* feared could

be contradicted by none—that Miss Cooksley, not contented with having coquetted, most particularly and disgracefully, with this young man—had, in defiance of every principle of honour and sentiment, positively promised to marry him; to which perfidious act, her mother, unquestionably, if not both her parents, were parties. This grievous news, old Mr. Trecothick added, it was the more painful to him to impart—as he feared that this man, Slatterbrain, would turn out to be the very same person who had once already behaved so ill to his dearest George, by deserting him, with unparalleled baseness, in France.

There may be those who would like to hear, and others who would not dislike to describe, the bitter and overwhelming surprise, the utter universal disappointment, and the agony of mortification, into which this intelligence threw Mr. George J. Trecothick. But, for ourselves,—if we had powers, we have not feelings equal to the description.

Poor, prudent, delicate, sensitive, much-injured youth! triumphed over by the man whom he most detested, and over whom he had lately assumed such airs—such unforgiving airs—of superiority! What was he to do now—Why he did and said many things, of which we only hold ourselves permitted to mention two. He took a place in the mail, in order to return to Wrexington; and, with a view that Miss Cooksley should get his letter, perhaps, half an hour earlier than if he had postponed the writing it till his arrival in the country—he made up a short letter for that young lady, which he committed to the general post. Mr. George expressed himself, as on another occasion, in the third person: but this performance was of a nature more lowering, brief, and stern, than the former—and finished, as we have been given to understand, in these very words.

"Such are the reports which have been communicated to Mr. G. J. Trecothick. Are they, or are they not, well-founded?

He asks that question of Miss Cooksley, by virtue of his undoubted right so to do; and expects such an answer as may become a lady of veracity and honour."

He had not been many hours at his father's house before Miss Caroline was apprized of that fact. She prepared her reply, therefore, and directed it to him accordingly.

But doting, as we do, upon this charming girl,—we still cannot say that the answer does her heart much credit; though, being pledged to conceal no document of importance, we feel ourselves, reluctantly, compelled to insert it.

"DEAR SIR,

"You adopt a tone, in writing to me, which, although I cannot entirely approve of it, I am disposed to overlook, on account of something—(I do not well know what)—which formerly passed between our parents; and which may have led you to suppose that you were entitled to hold such language. That you entertained some pe-

culiar notions with regard to me—I have long more than suspected; and am glad, therefore, of the opportunity afforded me by your note, for coming to an eclaircissement. My manner is naturally frank and open; and may probably have misled you as to the real description of my sentiments for you, which are these: the highest esteem and good will, and the most pure disinterested friendship; but, any further connexion between us—any one nearer, I mean, than that of a friendship which, I hope, will only terminate with our lives, is quite out of the question. Much as we have seen of each other, Mr. George, and frequently as I have written to you—once, I full well remember, upon that express subject; you do not (I find) thoroughly know me yet. I never could, nor ever shall, think of uniting myself with any man who has not ideas congenial to my own. Therefore, however I may respect your worth and talents, and however grateful I may feel for the honour done me by your regard—it be-

comes me to allow, with my usual candour, that there is SOMETHING in the reports which may have reached you, with reference to Mr. Slatterbrain and myself. Nor have you, if you come to consider, any right to be angry, or reason to be hurt. I do not prefer him on account of his superior virtues to yours—nor for any worldly advantages that he possesses, or may expect —after his uncle's death, or — — or, at any time. No, Mr. George. I accept him solely because he has those congenial ideas to my own, without which, I should think, I acted a most unworthy, and, indeed, indelicate part, in consenting to marry any person whatever. Mr. Slatterbrain tells me, he is an old friend of yours. He regrets that any difference should have arisen between you; and would be very glad that all was made up again: in which sentiment I beg leave to add—I cordially concur; assuring you, that nothing could give me more satisfaction than a continuation of your pleasing society, and of the

brotherly intimacy, with which you have ever honoured her,

Who remains

Your very obliged and faithful friend,

"CAROLINE COOKSLEY."

Mr. George Jeffery Treoothick read this letter twice to himself; and—before he tore it into ten million of pieces—once to his poor terrified father: whom he afterwards rated in so indecent a manner, that we must really beg leave to suppress what he said altogether. Then seizing his hat, he rushed out, with an impetuosity by no means natural to him, and made the best of his way to St. Mary Ottley. There he inquired for, or rather demanded, Miss Caroline: but that false fair one, fully prepared for the incursion, had not only ordered herself to be denied, but even when she heard he was absolutely within the house,—she declared peremptorily that nothing should induce her to see him; and what is more, she made her words good. At last, after he had waited nearly a quar-

ter of an hour in the drawing-room, Mrs. Cooksley was sent in; either to fight the battle of the family, or to soothe him, as she might find opportunity.

"O, Mr. George!" said she; "what, is it you, Mr. Trecothick? I vow and protest to you, Sir, I am sorry — — in many respects, as sorry as you can be, I'm sure, at what — — that is to say—glad, at all times, to have the pleasure of seeing you, you know; but perhaps, my dear Sir, perhaps — — won't you take a chair? I wish to give you all the comfort I can, Heaven knows. But, as I was saying—perhaps, it might have been as judicious to have stayed away, just for the present—just while matters are fresh, you see. I'm afraid, dear Sir, you must have been rather hurt at the turn things have taken; but then, to be sure, such a sensible young gentleman as you are will take it into consideration — — that — that, love is all a lottery, and doesn't go by merit. Likings and dislikings there's no accounting for; and as my poor

Caroline says—though one man had all the good qualities in the world—yet, if another should happen to have congenial id— —."

"Madam!" cried Trecothick, in a loud, violent, and impatient voice; "I come here to be heard, and heard I will be. Does Miss Cooksley—(for that is the only question now)—mean to forfeit all pretensions to truth, honour, and fidelity? You are perfectly conscious, Madam, that if I choose to exert it, I have the power of preventing this very discreditable proceeding. If I think fit to compel her—your daughter must be mine."

"Must!" replied Mrs. Cooksley; "must! — — of all imaginable things in nature! Must, Sir, is for the King. Do your worst, Sir; since you come to that. Try your luck in a court of justice. But, let me tell you this, you will get nobody to pity you, and to humour you, and to whine and whimper with you, in the town hall, at the assizes. No, no; and we shall tell our own story there: we shall tell all

about your little vain niceties, and your mean jealous ways. And, mind my words, you'll be laughed at by the counsellors—you will; in the face of the whole county. To come down to you, out of civility, and have my own child abused, indeed—of all things that ever entered into any body's imagination! I heard what you said, Sir; and your present state of mind is your only excuse for saying it. Want of honour and virtue! My Caroline forfeit her virtue—of all other things in the world!" With these words she flounced out of the room, leaving poor George Jeffery not only astonished, but almost petrified at this attack; when he had reckoned upon being himself the assailant, and such an assailant too as should have overwhelmed the whole family with remorse and confusion. Before he had half recovered himself, the good-humoured simple Mr. Cooksley poked his head into the room; and seeing George Trecothick there alone—he kindly endeavoured to offer him some consolation.

"Good day t'ye, George," said he; "I shan't pretend to be ignorant of what brings you here, which, depend upon it, I am as much vexed about as you can be. But how can one possibly help it? The girl has things all her own way with her mother—and her mother with me. I've often argued the matter, as well as I could with them both; and stood your friend in the affair of that Irish Lord, as well as in this business. But I give you my honour, that points must be carried in this house by other interest than mine."

"My dear Sir," said Trecothick, a little softened; "do not trouble yourself about it. You—I am confident—are my friend; and I merely called here to say—that if Miss Cooksley can really behave in the way that is reported of her—let her, in Heaven's name—just follow her inclination. Let her desert the man who would have given up all for her—and marry, if she so pleases, the most repulsive, unaccommodating, and unfeeling of mankind.

I thought she might have seen me—and have made some attempt to justify her conduct; but that could only have added to my contempt, and I should not now choose to see her."

"Well done, George," returned old Cooksley; "that's handsomely and spiritedly said: for, however the women may keep arguing, I know enough of the world to be certain, that a monstrous noise might have been made about all this. But you're right, my boy. In all cases of ill usage as to these kind of love matters,—it's curious, the difference between a man and a woman. The woman is always sure to be pitied—why, Heaven only knows; while the other, though worse treated perhaps, only gets laughed at and abused. As happened (and 'twas the strongest instance I ever knew) to an old friend and schoolfellow of mine—-Mr. Twaddleton. Sam Twaddleton, you know;—-you've often heard of him. Well, I say, this whole affair puts me in mind of a devilish good

thing, a first-rate thing that's told of him—about him and a young woman in the Lemp'ster long coach. Sam, you see, had taken his place, and was to have met the coach at the White ———"

"Heavenly powers—in mercy spare, pity, and deliver me!" cried Trecothick, tearing himself, with the loss of a button, from the old gentleman's grasp, and running headlong down stairs. "I swear they are all alike. The woman is a wretch and a savage; the girl a perjured jilt; and that old fool, whom I was considering as my friend, actually designed, in my present state of distraction, to have tormented me with one of his accursed stories. And why? why because, wonderful as it may seem, to any mind of a superior cast, he has some unaccountable pleasure in telling them. But so it is:—self, self, self, all through the creation."

SUBSTANCE

OF

SOME TRADITIONS

RESPECTING

GRIMMFER THE WIZARD.



CHAPTER I.

There are those who have a vast delight in tracing every thing, good or bad, to a remote antiquity. To such, many of the ephemeral customs, the behaviour, and language, of the higher orders, in our own times, are peculiarly disgusting—(we only allude, however, to the sort of cant phrases, and customs, introduced by insolent vanity or fashionable caprice);—and they look, with something nearer approaching an interest, to the habits of the common people; which, not so prone to innovation, are apt, of course, to savour, in a more or less de-

gree, of the manners of former ages: nor is the interest altogether destroyed by the lawlessness of such habits. The pedigree of most crimes and offenders is to be made out without much difficulty. For instance, we can now boast of full as many legitimate descendants from the Diana's Foresters, Gentlemen of the Shade, Minions of the Moon, and Cut-purses, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as it is desirable we should. We are also still blessed with ruffians and debauchees in plenty, sprung from, and indeed named after, the "Corinthians" of the same period; and, fortunately for the creditors of those high-mettled gentry, the posterity of the "Buff-Jerkins" is still in being, and at hand, to look after them.

Notwithstanding the laudable exertions of the Mendicity Society, the sturdy beggars of our day, seem, in some places, by no means unworthy of their predecessors, who imprinted such notable marks of talent on the shoulders, sides, and ribs of the

renowned Robin Hood. And, indeed, of late years, so serious have been the offences, and so formidable the gangs of poachers, as to prove, pretty satisfactorily, their origin; and to show, how little they have degenerated from that favourite of romance.

In France, since the more general division of property, and abolition of the strict feudal rights with regard to the game, things may have been altered; and the enterprizing class of poachers may, there, have declined from their former importance. But, in the earlier half of the fourteenth century, the period of which this story treats, a man had better, in most cases, have committed murder, than any act of hostility against the deer of those powerful and ferocious barons in the south of France, who ruled that part of the country with violence the most oppressive, and a sway all but totally uncontrolled.

In the year 1332, at the beginning of the month of October, and after night-fall,

three men, armed and equipped like hunters, and clad with some pretension to grace and effect, though in garments of the coarsest texture, soiled and torn—might have been seen (but for the darkness which then prevailed) running, actually, for their lives. They incurred considerable hazard of losing them, moreover, even in the very attempt to escape, down the shaggy side of a mountain somewhere between Javoux and Canourgue, in the province of Languedoc.

Well was it for them that the night had set in; for, the shouts of their pursuers, mingled with such cursings and upbraidings of their own party for tardiness, as clearly announced what gentle treatment the others had to expect, if they should suffer themselves to be overtaken—were heard now, almost close behind them—now, on their left—now, on their right—and sometimes, as they feared, on every side of them at once.

The foremost of these run-aways, who had greatly outstripped his companions,

thought fit to halt near the bottom of the hill, and to let them come up with him.

"Hist, hist!" said he, softly; "how pestilent dark it is!"

"The better for us, then," observed one of his fellows.

"Aye," said the first: "but the diabolical mischance is, that, in our situation, what is good for us on one point, cannot choose but be bad on many others. Hast seen the forwardest of the hell-hounds? Hast seen any of them?"

"How the plague should I—when 'tis so dark we cannot see our hands before our noses? But I have heard them; and at no great distance off, neither: so hast thou, I take it."

"Be quiet with thee: they are near us now. Not a word more, or they'll be upon us.—I am doubtful," he soon continued, in a whisper, "whether it be not our game to stand close up here, under cover of these trees——they might possibly pass us."

"Away, Gildouin, away!" shouted both

the others—"or, by the rood, we are all dead men!"

At the same moment, the bolt from a cross-bow whistled among their heads, and struck the trunk of one of the trees with a heavy and appalling sound.

The cries of the men in chase of them now rose with redoubled shrillness, hope, and eagerness. Forward dashed the pursued; and the most advanced, leaping over some at random, and breaking through the rest of a coppice at the foot of the hill, betook them to a doubtful and perilous path, formed by a chain of small hillocks, through a morass; and ran on with a confidence which despair only could have supplied, aided, indeed, by a knowledge of the locality, on the part of Gildouin, almost equally accurate by night as by day. Two of them soon got beyond the immediate effects of their enemies' wrath. The third, a stripling of fifteen or sixteen at the utmost, was not so fortunate. Before their last and most formidable alarm, he had al-

ready run so far, that his feet were swollen and sore, his legs ached, and the whole strength of his body was failing apace. Nevertheless, he kept up tolerably well with his friends, till they had adventured on the path through the swampy ground; when, perceiving that he lost way, while those in the rear were gaining upon him continually——in the endeavour to cross the treacherous part of the plain quicker, by striking off in another direction, he plunged into the morass, and stuck fast; in which situation, from mixed feelings of rage, grief, and terror, he wept aloud. But his distresses approached their termination. An arrow, probably shot at a venture by his pursuers on their hearing his cries, transfixed his body, entirely, from left to right, and pierced his heart in its passage. He fell, after one shriek of agony, and was found, when the men who sought him came up to the spot, lying quite dead, with his face in the water.

Meanwhile, the companions of this unlucky youth profited greatly by the bustle

and interruption occasioned by his fate. They cleared the marshy ground; passed over several rough hills on the further side of it; and, having skirted the south-western end of an immense moor, which stretches far over that country, and forms a black and dreary outline towards La Guiole—Gildouin, the swifter and stronger of the two, again stopped, in a narrow valley, between two mountainous ridges, and suffered the hindermost to overtake and join him.

"Is Myrtille with you?" said the former: "have you brought the boy off?"

"Be content, my good fellow," was the reply—"if you can save yourself. Our case is a desperate one; and the less we think of past misfortunes, the more we shall prove our wisdom."

"Dost preach to me, dolt?" said Gildouin: "Dost dare to lecture me about wisdom and fortitude, when I have lost my near kinsman, while thou hast neither suffered in mind nor body?—Oh, Powers above! our trade is a bad one, both for the present and future: but I am in

for it now, more deeply than ever; and to what other could I turn me? Art certain, Robichon—that he hath fallen into their hands?"

"Not alive, I fear. That he was wounded I am but too sure: his cry could never be mistaken."

"You fear!—Idiot that thou art! If those butchers have got his body, 'twere better far it were lifeless."

Robichon thought, that, instead of venting his spleen and peevishness upon him, his leader, who was, beyond doubt, a more strong and active man, though not a younger one, than himself, might as well have delayed his flight, and endeavoured to rescue his own nephew; and a strong impression of the even unnatural selfishness induced by their lawless and marauding habits, struck his mind with a sense of utter disgust.

But Gildouin was not altogether a safe person to quarrel with; besides, the noises of the foresters in pursuit of them were

scarcely out of his ears; and he expected their dreadful whooping and shouting to be renewed every moment. Robichon, therefore, when he saw the other man seat himself composedly, upon a piece of rock—remonstrated, and urged, that as his nephew's fate was now irreparable, it would be worse than idle, by the indulgence of a—fruitless spleen, to throw away their own lives also. Gildouin, however, appeared to be but little moved by these expostulations; nor, in truth, did the other feel so anxious to move him, when it turned out, by the subsequent conversation, that they now were within the King of England's province; whose Barons, with the instinctive jealousy of a smaller state surrounded by formidable neighbours, were prompt to resist any incursion which bore the least appearance of hostility. These fugitives rightly judged, therefore, that their foes would not venture to follow them, in such numbers, within the territory of Guienne.

"Away with care, then!" cried Robi-

chon, relieved by the very decided opinion of his leader on this last point: "cheer up; abate thy distress and rage just for the present, and the ghost of poor Myrtille shall be pacified hereafter, by a delicious and bloody revenge."

"Did I complain?" the other sternly asked.

"I never said so," replied Robichon.

"Then cease thy prate: and when I see thee bear with any calamity as well as I endure this—you shall have my free leave to preach about patience, and what not, till your tongue tires. No more of such stuff. How goeth the night, I marvel? Perdition on our luck! They got hold of the hind, as well as — — no matter. Would we'd had time to bury the venison; since we could not carry it away—"

"And the dogs too," said Robichon; "what hath become of them?"

"O, rot the dogs. They know these moors as well as I do; and cannot be far off, I'll swear."

With that he produced a whistle; and, after applying it twice or thrice to his lips, looking round him suspiciously each time, although nothing could be seen for the darkness—he made bold at last to use it freely. The sound rang shrill through the silence of night, and was succeeded, on more than one quarter, by the distant baying of dogs. On their right hand, in particular, so loud and long a barking commenced, within a minute after the report of the whistle, that Robichon observed—

"Prithee be careful; for much caution is required yet. I would say,—Gildouin,—many more dogs than our own have answered to that call. St. Jerome defend us — — do you see there?" He pointed to a light, which now appeared gliding along the top of the hill, and which speedily seemed to be multiplied, at least six fold.

"They are roused i' faith," said Gildouin: "this is rather more than I intended; and it is to be wished, that I may

not have drawn us both into some fresh disaster.

A rapid rustling noise was at that instant heard near them. "Who goes there?" cried Robichon, in considerable alarm: "keep off, whoever you are, or I shall send an arrow through you!"

"The dogs, you fool; the dogs," said his companion; and he said what was perfectly true: for first one, and, almost immediately afterwards, two more tall hairy skeletons of lurchers bounded by their side, —and were made much of by Robichon, who caressed them with an unusual fondness—a fondness, indeed, exactly proportioned to his consternation at their approach.

Gildouin, meantime, continued to watch the lights upon the hill. "That's it," said he: "they go down now; they are going down, if we keep ourselves still—three are out already. That's it;—now they are all out; and the brow of the old

hill is just as black as before. You know what caused all that piece of work?"

"Your whistle, no doubt;" replied the other; "but I knew not that we had been so close to any of their nests. Whose is the hold?—The Montcroullier man?"

"Aye," said Gildouin; "and right over against him, upon the heights, on the other side of the valley, is De Varogne's castle: so they pretty well command the pass between them."

"It wouldn't break my heart," observed the younger depredator, "to be seated, at this moment, by either of their hall fires; with a chine of beef at one elbow, and a flask of wine at the other. Do tell us what characters they bear! Tell me a little about this same Baron de Montcroullier! Folks speak well of him, methinks."

"Let all speak of him as they find him. 'Tis true, he maketh not so free as do many of his order, with the daughters and wives of his people: 'tis true, that he neither harasseth his vassals from morn to eve by hard

labour and exaction, nor committeth them to the dungeon, when they can no longer work nor pay. But to knights of our calling, Monsieur Robichon, he is as ill disposed as the worst of them:—and, were I obliged to make the choice—I should rather trust to mercy—aye, marry, and look for favour too, from his nephew De Varogne, than from the saintly Baron:—by my troth, should I."

"However, neither of their cages, I reckon, would be quite the resting place for us to-night," said Robichon. "So let us lie down, fasting though we be, under the next bush: 'twill something recruit our weary limbs, albeit we may not sleep very soundly."

But Gildouin, who no longer appeared to be in the mind for loitering, advised against the measure; and his advice, the other was much in the habit of conforming to. They proceeded, therefore, though with many a curse upon the mischances of th

evening; and, if the truth must be told, many a sigh of anguish and despondency.

At length, in answer to the anxious demands of Robichon, as to whither they might be going, and what plan he had in view—the more experienced of the deer-stealers deigned to inform him, that when they should have got clear through the valley, he knew of a hut inhabited by a lone goatherd, among the hills beyond, where they should certainly meet with a lodging, which, under their circumstances, might be called princely; and where they would likewise have a reasonable chance of finding some provisions. Robichon was ready to admit that this information had a comfortable sound; but doubted how far the worthy goatherd might enter into the humour of this invasion of his domicile, by two men hungry enough to consume his whole store.

"If he makes resistance—nay, even if he but makes a noise," said Gildouin, clapping his right hand to the couteau de chasse

which he wore in his belt—"I have a friend here, who shall speak to him, and whose reasonings are apt to carry some force with them."

"What—the pest! you would not go to cut the man's throat in cold blood?"

"None of thy pitiful jargon; thou would'st do it thyself for a mouthful of supper; only 'dare not' standeth in the way. No canting, to cover weakness: we are at war with mankind, and mankind with us. Have they not, within the last hour, murdered mine own sister's child before my face—as it were! Come on, I say. Let the tyke produce his victual readily, and serve us cheerfully, and, for me, he shall rest unscathed." Upon that subject, Robichon also perceived that no more was to be said: indeed (as his friend had intimated), there were but few measures to which he might not have been reconciled, that night, by the prospect of enjoying a meal of almost any description, a grateful fire, and an undisturbed nap.

He again followed his principal, therefore, with what alacrity he might.

When they had nearly reached the end of the valley, the moon began partially to appear; but so as to afford them very little assistance. She showed, however, at intervals, the heights which they were approaching, and which, in that frail and dim light, seemed to be confused and mingled together, crossed and heaped one upon the other, resembling a barrier more effectual than the loftiest castle wall, and appearing completely to obstruct their progress beyond the extremity of the valley. In one of these gleams of moonlight, it was likewise observable, that they had been edging away to the northward considerably; and were now (with only a small river intervening, whose ripple they had heard for some time) almost under the hill, on whose brow stood the edifice opposite to the castle of Montcroullier—a fortress of respectable strength, which Gildouin had already described as the residence of Guy de Vargne,

a near kinsman of the Baron Montcroullier. In truth, he was the only child of that chieftain's brother, not long since deceased.

On this discovery, the younger of our two freebooters—for, though they styled themselves foresters, it would have been difficult, in point of real propriety, to object to the appellation just bestowed upon them—once more relaxing from his reserve, began to press his better-informed companion with new and abundant questions respecting the Sieur de Varogne. And, for some time, with whatever roughness and surliness, Gildouin condescended to gratify his curiosity. Indeed, he appeared to have contracted some partiality for the person or habits of that noble: for, in all mention of the Lords of the valley, which induced a comparison between them, he invariably gave the preference to De Varogne, although obliged to admit the superior reputation and universal popularity of his uncle, the Baron of Montcroullier. The nature of these encomiums Robichon fully

comprehended: and understood—(though most certainly the other man had never expressly said so), that, whereas Montcroullier was gentle towards his vassals in general, merciful to the weak, and a protector of the helpless and oppressed—De Varogne gave a wider range to his beneficence; often including within his good will, and even encouragement, those meritorious individuals, who, desirous to gain a livelihood through their own exertions, were repressed by the prejudices of society.

Now it happened that the amiable Robichon, though he could have made his mind up to such a proceeding, easily enough, if it had been absolutely necessary; had yet a feeling of preference for a hearty meal without knocking any goatherds on the head. Therefore, after his companion had been expatiating, far more than he was wont on ordinary occasions, in commendation of Sir Guy de Varogne,—Robichon recurred to certain notions which he had thrown out before; again began to talk of the comforts

of that nobleman's hall fire, and observed, just as a matter of speculation, that his hospitality might surely be confided in, should they adventure to present themselves at the castle.

" De Varogue himself might be trusted, an that were all," replied Gildouin; " but the step cannot now be thought of. Rest satisfied; there are reasons against it."

" I know of none."

" Probably not; but if my reasons be particular—they will govern the conduct of us both, I suspect. Sir Guy is not alone: he hath one with him whom I affect not—a guest, I tell thee."

" Many guests, in all likelihood," said the younger; but none who would devour us alive, it may be hoped."

" Aroynt thee, troublesome grumbler! thou wilt still be obstinate?" cried Gildouin. " Gang onward, I say; unless thou would'st desire a feud between us. Go on with thee; and should we find ought wherewithal to fill our bellies to-night—at

supper, peradventure, I may explain myself farther."

Soured, fatigued, and fretting, but not audibly, Robichon sunk once more into silence, and acted conformably to the counsel, or rather command, which he had received. The moon had now totally withdrawn her light. They could no longer see the towers of De Varogne's dwelling, nor even the base of the rock whereon they stood: and it was only when Robichon perceived himself to be ascending, and moreover ascending with considerable labour and difficulty—that he was sure they had quitted the valley, and that his leader, who boasted no more knowledge of the country than he really possessed, had hit upon the path which would conduct them through the uplands. Soon, gleams of light were seen—frequent, but delusive; and so short in duration, that they might almost have been described as flashes. At last, when they had attained a considerable elevation, Gildouin stood still upon a platform of rock, and allowed

that it might be preferable to remain there till the moon should come out somewhat steadier and stronger:—an event which seemed improbable just at that moment, but which nevertheless took place in a much shorter time than they had reckoned upon. So far they were fortunate: they had also the satisfaction to descry the cabin, of which they were in quest, very near at hand, on a point of the hill immediately above them. As they made for this object, which they were now enabled to do with sufficient certainty—Robichon's qualms came on again; and, however he might have been relieved by the probable termination of the fatigues and hardships of the night, he felt anew a very strong repugnance to murdering the goatherd. He determined that, if possible, he, at least, would have no hand in it; he hoped that the poor man might be submissive and accommodating; and cast a glance at his fellow marauder of deadly aversion, controlled only by fear. The nature of Gildouin's reflexions cannot

so exactly be portrayed: he looked resolute and ferocious, but as if he had something disagreeable upon his mind; he turned his right hand to his belt—and when they had got up to the small level space in front of the cabin, he advanced with a swift and decided pace.

The door appeared to have been fastened; but small was the resistance which it could oppose to such strength as that of Gildouin.

At the second effort, he burst headlong into the hovel; the dimensions of which were so very trifling, that they almost instantly ascertained—to the great relief of Robichon, and probably to the satisfaction, more or less, of them both—that the goatherd was absent.

The senior of this worthy couple, never unprovided when mischief was likely to be going forward, had materials about him for striking a light; and indeed other resources within his pouch, of which his companion was then ignorant, but propor-

tionally delighted when they were afterwards most pleasingly and appropriately brought into play. They were no sooner enabled to see around them, than they commenced, as was natural, a strict search for provisions: and though they certainly met with no delicacies, they were gratified, upon the whole, at finding any thing. The larger half of a kid was discovered, which the honest peasant (who accounted for it to his master as having died a natural death) had attempted to preserve by salting; although that process, unluckily, had not been resorted to till full late.

They were likewise relieved by the display of a quantity of oaten cake; some of it pretty fresh—but the far greater part mouldy; and the whole thick, husky, hard, and sandy. However, to make amends for the unfavourable articles, a large dish, not only of milk, but of fresh milk, was espied by one of their dogs, who, by dint of rating, kicks, and blows, was fain to abandon his prize, before any serious attack had been

made upon it. Our foresters now lighted a fire; and disposed of themselves very much at their ease. They gave their canine allies, not indeed the first choice of dainties, but a liberal share of the repast; and that Robichon might not have a wish upon earth ungratified—his companion produced, before the conclusion of this banquet, a leathern bottle, of fair length and respectable bulk, more than three fourths of which was filled with spirits of ardent and tremendous quality.

This liquid they quaffed, for the most part, sheer: and the consequence was, that they advanced apace in courage, in self-satisfaction, in eloquence, in noise, in vows of revenge for the death of Gildouin's nephew, in contempt and defiance of all their enemies, and (for the time) in friendship with each other.

CHAPTER II.

The elder of our two marauders, as he domineered in other matters, so he likewise took a lead in the conversation. He boasted of his hawks, of his dogs, of his own sagacity, and of his own strength; and the other was disposed to keep him in good humour. "Didst ever," said Robichon, "see the man yet, on whom thou wouldst have turned thy back?"

"Never, as I hope to thrive;" returned Gildouin freely, though he finished what he had to say with something of a reservation. "Never, I repeat, provided he were content to trust to his own natural force or cunning. There are those, no doubt, who possess a knowledge, however they may come by it, which the ordinary race of mortals neither have nor wish to have; and knowledge ever giveth power. With such, I might decline to enter upon any

competition, whether of art or force; the strife must necessarily be unequal.

"Say ye so? I do then partly comprehend why thou wert so averse to our throwing ourselves upon the generosity of the Sieur de Varogne a while ago. You affirm that he hath a guest with him; he may have many; but of one in particular doth even Gildouin Jodelet stand in awe?"

"Master Robichon, your intentions are good, and I have a kindly feeling for thee; but why—pr'ythee why canst not acquire the habit of avoiding those unpalatable remarks?"

"Nay, rebuke me not; when thou didst faithfully promise, that if we were fortunate enough to meet with any supper, thou wouldst ——."

"No such thing," cried Gildouin roughly, "or if I did—hold. Did I though, in truth? but little was expected in the way of repast, I trow, when I thus pledged myself. Promises, however, are

vows; and vows must take their course. Hand me the cup." He drank deeply. "Hast ever heard talk of one Thibaud L'Aunony?"

Robichon raised himself from his reclining posture, threw a glance almost unconsciously behind him, and nodded his head. "I never saw him;" said he, "but few belong to our part of the kingdom who have not heard of him."

"I did suppose so," said Gildouin, "but you know him not?"

"Never yet beheld him," replied the other.

"The luckier thou; I have seen him once too often. That man and I had many dealings together; embarked in no few adventures together; we have been intimate—companions, but never were we friends. How it was brought about, I am ignorant; but whenever I have acted in concert with *him*, my invention hath been nought, my resources feeble before his, and my boldness repressed. Our mutual pro-

jects, indeed, might have appeared to thrive, but he was ever the sole gainer by them; and when I assumed the tone to which others are apt to bend, and which, as thou art well aware, I am sufficiently ready to support by acts; he would look upon me with cold derision, or laugh maliciously in my face. And 'tis not, I solemnly swear," said he, raising his voice through emotion, "that he, in any point, is more fearless than myself; it is not, that he would undertake any service or encounter aught of peril, at which I should blench; but the truth is, he hath THE DREADFUL SECRET! Hereafter, as they say, he will howl for it; but at present, his intelligence as far overruleth mine, as doth mine, that of our dogs now sleeping before the fire."

"By Holy Mary," said Robichon, seizing the goblet in his turn, "thou hast passing merit in providing us with such noble liquor; but for the aid of thy bottle, 'twould have suited me right badly to pass

the night, even within the same province with thy former comrade. And scantily can I comprehend, moreover, how thou, who dost so fear him as no longer to hold intercourse ——"

"The word 'fear,'" exclaimed Gildouin with sternness, "hath not yet been pronounced by me."

"Be it so," continued the younger; "still I understand not from whence you derived the knowledge, that such a person was, at this exact time, within De Varogne's dwelling."

"Thou needest not rack thy brain about that matter. Know it I do; from one who hath lived in confidence with us both; who hateth him equally with myself, and would hardly deceive me."

"But doth not his choice of such a companion, argue ill for the Sieur de Varogne?"

"We avail ourselves of many instruments," replied Gildouin somewhat contemptuously, "whose nature we may hold

in no great respect. For Sir Guy de Varogne, he hath, more than once, stood my friend when his countenance was of consequence to me—and I have but my good word to give him in return; but this much, Robichon, will I admit to thee frankly; that, were I his deadliest foe, I should not desire to see his perdition more securely sealed, than by his forming any kind of connexion with that man. 'Tis the knight's own affair however, and let him look to it."

So earnestly had they been talking, as not to be conscious, till now, of their extreme good fortune, in having reached the shelter when they did, and in having taken possession thereof with so little cost and trouble. For the last twenty minutes or more it had been raining fast; and about this time, the splashing of the drops had not only become audible from without the hut, but many of them also began to fall through the hole in the roof which afforded a vent for the smoke, making the flame hiss and fret, and annoying the dogs as

they lay snoring near the fire, who growled in their sleep, and frequently, though in a slight degree, shifted their positions. But no moderate disturbance would have sufficed to have awakened them, after their day's fatigue and the full feed which they had enjoyed; and their example soon seemed likely to be followed by the gallant Gildouin himself. His eyes commenced an unsteady winking and rolling; he rambled in his discourse; and while imprecating the severest denunciations upon his own head, if he could not drink double the quantity of spirits which they had just jointly exhausted, without being in the least affected by the feat; he swung himself backwards, and fell all along from his seat, amongst the relics of their supper.

Once upon the ground, he seemed to like his situation so well, that he rolled and sprawled about; desired Robichon, in terms scarcely intelligible, to watch for a while; promising to take his turn, after he

should shortly have refreshed himself; and in less than a minute was found asleep.

Robichon, however, who had lately felt so completely comfortable and satisfied, was again discontented at this arrangement; he considered that in this, as in all other instances, he had been made a mere tool of; he thought himself ridiculed by the promise that he should be allowed a turn of sleep hereafter; both because the morn was fast approaching, and because, if it had been still further off, he knew well, that his partner would have his nap out, when once he had tasted its sweets, despite of all vows, oaths, and equity. But in point of fact, Gildouin happened to be the more drowsy of the two; for the spirits which the younger had partaken of, had inflamed and irritated rather than made him lethargic; besides which, his mind was not so obdurate as his companion's; and his reflections more uneasy at times, upon their condition and prospects. He dwelt, too, upon what they had been

talking about, the character of that L'Aunony. He could not drive the subject from his mind; and the louder his friend and the dogs continued to snore, the less he liked to find himself the only one in the hut awake, and capable of meditating upon these matters, which were not perhaps of the most exhilarating nature.

The heavy rain had now abated; but he yet heard frequent drops from without; and, as he fancied (indeed, he laboured hard to convince himself that it was all merely fancy), a sort of noise mingled with the rain and wind, equally unexpected and unaccountable under the present circumstances. Robichon, to be sincere, would have felt as happy just now if the sun had risen; an event which, he calculated, must be near at hand; and he ventured—the exertion, for more reasons than one, went much against the grain—but he ventured out a little beyond the door, to ascertain, if possible, how the morning advanced. Very dark still, very wet, and exceedingly dis-

mal. He was willing, however, to believe that the horizon looked grey in the East; though he certainly would have been more cheered by that discovery, had not the continuance of the same strange sound which had lately perplexed him, been now completely confirmed. He was, in short, no longer able to doubt, that he had not only heard before, but did hear at this moment, a wailing noise like the cry of a young child. Robichon retreated—ran, perhaps, would have been the better word—back into the hut again; and moved Gildouin with his foot, desirous to wake him. But the surly curse with which that ruffian deprecated the intention, and then turned himself, grumbling, to as profound a sleep as before—prevented his purpose for the moment. However, Robichon stood in no such awe of their three dogs, whose slumbers he dispelled with infinite dispatch by kicks; and no sooner had they lifted up their heads, than the attention of the whole three became at once arrested by the

same wailing sound, now more distinctly audible than ever. They shook themselves fiercely; looked eagerly towards the door of the hovel; and growled in a most menacing manner. Soon, not merely the cry of an infant, but the step of a man likewise, were heard close to the hut. Robichon called aloud to Gildouin, who still lay snoring; fitted an arrow to his bow; and, as he stood ready to resist any aggression—perceived a tall figure at the door, with a child in his arms.

The man was covered by a long, dark garment, with a cloth cap on his head, which might have had some form originally, but was now rendered utterly shapeless by the rain, while the single high feather, designed to surmount it, hung down, piteously soaked and broken, upon his shoulder.

At the first glimpse of this spectacle, Robichon was about to have drawn his bow, but desisted, on seeing that the man had an infant in his arms; and thence con-

cluded, that he neither could be inclined nor fit for any act of offence. But the hounds seemed to have adopted no such train of reasoning; and if they were savage before, they grew tenfold more so at sight of these objects. They rushed furiously towards the intruder; and the oldest and fiercest, actually made a spring at the child. But he fell to the ground short of his prey; and not to the astonishment alone, but to the infinite horror of Robichon,—every one of the dogs, without a word said to rebuke them, without a sign from any body to daunt them, cowered, whined dismally, and slunk away to the farthest distance from the door, which the hovel would admit.

The persuasion of Robichon (a degree of credulity by no means uncommon, even among the highest classes in that age,) certainly was, that he stood in presence of a spectre or demon. He appeared to labour under some spell which prevented him from averting his eyes. With his

countenance fixed upon this apparition, he felt upon the ground for his comrade; and when he ran back against his body, he grasped him with such a force, the force of extreme terror, as must have disturbed any sleep short of the last. Gildouin sat half upright; and in his usual ingratiating accents when any thing had put him out of humour, demanded why he was thus to be molested. By way of reply, his comrade pointed to the figure, which had now advanced into the middle of the hut, only; and was steadfastly contemplating them, without having, as yet, uttered one word.

"A stranger here!" exclaimed Gildouin, rubbing his eyes, "Who is he?" "I like not the appearance of him;" said the other in a whisper. "Who is he?" repeated Gildouin, "You tremble. Hast not dared to accost him, coward? Then give place to a better man than thyself, who will soon come to an understanding with him."

This said, he went forward a step or two, and approached the stranger; who at

that moment removed the cap which had covered all the upper part of his face. Gildouin ejaculated a most tremendous oath; and in words of deep import, though not very audibly expressed, "'Tis himself!" said he; and turned away with a subdued manner and fallen countenance.

"What do ye here, and what hath become of Bacle the goatherd?" said the last comer; then addressing himself to the infant which he carried: "Be still, brat! or thy yelping shall soon finish, once and for ever." The child possibly might have been of an age to comprehend this menace and injunction; but whether that were so or not, he fully appeared to comprehend the frightful expression conveyed by the look of the man who held him; and hiding his own face, he repressed his crying, though not (to judge by the half-smothered sobs,) without painful effort.

Gildouin seemed averse to looking directly at his unwelcome acquaintance; but took a glance at him, now and then,

implying as much fear, detestation, and malice, as one human being can feel towards another in presence of whom he finds himself cowed and powerless. He thought it expedient, however, to answer the question. "We came hither for shelter from the foul night, and for safety from those who pursued us. If we are in thy way we must tramp; I well know that. Words signify little; and with thee, I enter into no contest. As to the goatherd, if he meeteth with no more bodily harm, this night, than he hath suffered from us, he may sleep sound as his best wishers could desire."

"Hath accident befriended him, or thy merciful disposition, Gildouin Jodelet?"

Gildouin shuddered; he hastily seized Robichon's arm, who had been witnessing this scene in silent amazement and terror, and drew him forcibly from the hut; while the dogs, under cover of their masters' retreat, scampered out as if they had run for their lives. Robichon, before they had

gone far, recovered the use of his tongue, and began to be inquisitive; but the other checked him sullenly and coarsely; and declaring that ten *ordinary men* should never have dispossessed him of the cabin, he continued, however, to make the best of his way from it, with all possible expedition. As their course led back to the valley, Robichon concluded that they were, at last, to try the hospitality of De Varogne, and to offer him their services. And such, indeed, had probably been Gildouin's design; but they were prevented from carrying it into effect, by a body of horsemen, who surrounded them on a sudden, as they entered the glen below; accused them, either of having themselves committed, or of being accessory to a most grievous outrage upon the Baron of Montcroullier, and in spite of all they could say, or rather without listening to a single word, hurried them away to the dwelling of that chief, and conducted them straitway into his presence.

They found the Baron in an agony of ungovernable distress; raving, perpetually restless, and all but absolutely frantic; now exerting himself for a few minutes to appear calm, and now requiring even the forcible interposition of the people around, to prevent him from doing himself some material injury. He adjured his attendants by every solemn form of supplication to tell him, in what he had so heinously offended as to deserve these heavy and continued afflictions. The most affectionate wife (he said,) that ever man was blessed with, had been taken from him not half a year ago, by the untimely stroke of death ——; and he was proceeding to expatiate upon his present severe visitation, when the arrival of the two deer-stealers pinioned and guarded, brought him in some measure to his recollection. Without the delay of a moment, he entered eagerly and keenly upon their examination; and in reply to his furious demands, the senior of the two gave a firm and pretty faithful account of their

night's adventures, up to the time when they took possession of the goatherd's cabin—but no further. Robichon, on the other hand, perhaps fearful of concealing any thing, perhaps desirous to acquire favour by affording more information, told the whole story of the third man's arrival, with all its circumstances, even that of their own expulsion from the hovel in consequence; the reason for which, he professed himself no more able to explain, than he was to acquaint them with the name of the intruder.

These particulars excited a shout, and universal uproar; and instant death was peremptorily denounced against them both, unless they chose to tell who the third man was, and all about him; while some of the most active of their own people, mounted on as fleet horses as the province of Guienne could produce, were instantly despatched towards the hut among the hills where these outlaws had passed the greater part of the night. Meantime as accurate

a description as he could give of the stranger's person, was supplied by Robichon; which, to his astonishment, nobody then present appeared to recognize. But his name he could not know; and though he had his suspicions, he did not venture to hazard a guess. In this dilemma, with hands uplifted and imploring looks, he turned to his companion; but Gildouin would not assist him. The latter had, probably, calculated upon the mild and merciful nature of the Lord of Montcroullier, or perhaps upon other interest which he might reckon himself to possess within the domain; and feeling tolerably confident, that the threats of putting them to death were mere words, he deemed it possible, that his best chance, not only of deliverance, but further advantage, might arise from keeping the secret.

While this scene of clamour and confusion was going on, Sir Guy de Varogne arrived at the castle; and was ushered, with profound respect, into the apartment. He

appeared to be a well-formed, handsome youth; fair in complexion, with very dark hair, and a great quantity of it; and as he wrung the Baron's hand, and addressed a few hasty words to him in sympathy with his distresses, many conceived that he was scarcely able to utter them, from his own agitation and tears, which would not be controlled. But, the Lord of Montcroullier, whom the previous examining of the two men brought there under accusation, had restored, in a degree, to his accustomed composure, now quite lost himself again. He replied to his nephew wildly and without connexion in his discourse; then, sunk into a gloom, like the silence of a perverse child; and then left them abruptly. De Varogne at first seemed inclined to have followed him; but altering his mind, he ordered some of the household to look after their lord; while he (seeing them closely watched and fettered,) turned to inquire about Robichon and his comrade.

Gildouin, who, from the moment of the Sieur de Varogne's entrance, had looked to him, as to a superior indeed, but to an old acquaintance—with pleasure and confidence, was very greatly disconcerted, when that chieftain, neither acknowledging him by open avowal nor private signal, joined with those attendants of the Baron Montcroullier who had been most bitter against him; and, assuming a direction in the Castle during the indisposition of his uncle; in a tone, by no means the less formidable for being composed and quiet, ordered the prisoners instantly to be confined—and in separate dungeons.

"Sir Guy," said Gildouin, "Do I hear you aright?" Are you in earnest, Sir Guy de Varogne? Nay then, I have more to tell—I say, I have more to tell; and before I am sacrificed for the deed of another, I demand to be ——"

"Take them away," cried De Varogne, raising his voice, but without the least sign of dismay or irritation; "audacity

and insolence are ever the last refuge of these vagabonds. Let them, as I before said, be confined apart from each other, and I shall know how to extract the truth from them both." The elder prisoner, thus overborne, clenched his fists and grinned with very rage, at what he deemed such gross and triumphant injustice. Poor Robichon, on the other hand, began to whimper, and would have fallen on his knees—but they were both dragged from the chamber.

Gildouin stormed and blustered; he endeavoured to address those who were conveying him to his dungeon; he threw out dark and serious allusions, and even openly menaced De Varogne—when he was silenced by a rude blow on the mouth, from one of his guards, additionally chained for his contumacy, and fastened to a post; where, for the space of more than an hour, they left him to his meditations. Before the expiration of that time, however, he had considered his situation

coolly and rationally; and, ill-used as he unquestionably had been, he felt persuaded that it must be by management and not violence, if he should escape much worse treatment. He resolved, therefore, though it went grievously against his feelings, to coax and cajole the men who might be placed over him; and had decided upon unlimited submission,—when a light glimmered through the crevices of the door (for at eight, on an autumnal morning, this dungeon was still dark as midnight), and in the next moment the bolts were forced back, and a key turned in the lock, after much hitching and resistance. Monsieur Gildouin at the first glimpse recognized his visitor; and, notwithstanding what had passed in the chamber above, conceived hopes from the circumstance.

"How long may it be, Gildouin Jodelet," observed De Varogne, after he had carefully secured the door behind him, "since you were employed by me, in our feud with the Comte de Bergerac? Look up

man! I have neither forgotten thee nor thy services."

"And yet, methinks, your honour hath just made but a scurvy return for them," replied the other somewhat gruffly, but with a natural manner, and no such surliness as to be offensive.

"Dost take me for an idiot, Gildouin? I well know thou dost not. Yet, conscious as thou must needs have been, that I could not confer with thee in that place, and before that company, I was amazed, I own, at the want of judgment, heat, and absurdity, which seemed to govern thy whole conduct. Such ill-timed impetuosity hath, as I hear, drawn down upon thee rougher usage than was in my contemplation; but which, I cannot but say, your folly hath, in a great measure, merited. Enough of this however. Jodelet, I have just seen the young man, thy companion; something of the weakest, I trow,—in spirit, if not in body, for the life to which thou art training him! But thus runs his story. How far it

may have been created by sheer imagination or terror, I have no means of judging." He then proceeded to relate the account that he had received from Robichon of their adventure in the hut; at parts of which Gildouin "tushed" and "pshawed," but assented to the rest, and admitted its correctness.

"For thyself, Jodelet," continued De Varogne, "they say, thou hast hitherto refused to mention the name of the man who surprized you, and who, in fact, expelled you both from your quarters. Now, that refusal, I can only explain to my own satisfaction, by one supposition. In truth and reality, Gildouin, his name is unknown to thee ——"

"As you please about that," muttered the prisoner; "but unless I knew him long ere he was known to Sir Guy de Varogne, I am more mistaken than usual."

"Sirrah, hearken to me. Here you are, many fathoms below the surface of the earth, chained, manacled, and at my en-

tire disposal. That favour may be earned by discretion, thou art perfectly conscious; and as well art thou convinced, that if the step should be necessary for my own safety, you might suffer death within the next five minutes; nor would an opportunity be afforded thee, for saying so much as one syllable in thy defence. But I am disposed to trust thee, man;—not, to promises, vows, or oaths, but to your native sense and judgment. If I were to procure your release; will ye both be gone *for ever;* not merely from the vicinity of this castle, but from the province of Guienne?"

"Sir Guy, we will."

"Thou hast wisely determined," replied De Varogne; "and 'tis time to speak out. Give me the name of HIM whom ye left in the goatherd's cabin."

"Thibaud L'Aunony."

"And thou hast long been conversant with him?"

"Too long, Sir Knight."

"Aye! sayest thou so? Till within

this fortnight I had never set eyes on him myself," observed the chieftain, musing.

"I have no more to say," resumed Jodelet: "let me go now, according to your word. Many reasons are there why you may depend upon my quitting this country; and not the least of them, is my wish to avoid the neighbourhood of the man you speak of."

"That may or may not be," replied De Varogne: "they have sent out a force in pursuit of him. Will he suffer himself to be overtaken, think ye? at all events, I can not dismiss thee till we are apprized of the result."

"Sir Guy, Sir Guy; you hardly mean me fair: it would have been more merciful to have murdered me outright, than to be raising my hopes this minute, only to crush them again in the next."

"Go to: be not impatient. We are fain, in the first place, to take care of ourselves. But the chances are in thy favour: 'tis twenty to one I release thee:—and if

you are let off at all, trust me, you shall not depart empty handed."

After the lapse of something above three hours, no very comfortable interval to Gildouin Jodelet, who, having deserved the gibbet every week, for several years past, seemed now likely to be executed, for an offence of which he was entirely guiltless—Sir Guy de Varogne returned, and made his parting promise good; as well by freeing both the deer stealers from durance, as by gratifying Gildouin with a liberal present, so far beyond his expectations, that it abundantly recompensed him for all the inconvenience he had undergone. And with his comrade Robichon, that worthy character departed far from the South of France—

> "The world before them, where to choose
> "Their place of rest."

What their ultimate fate might have been, we may guess perhaps, without the spirit of divination, but cannot pronounce

upon it: for, as their proceedings, henceforward, in no way related to this story, we shall abstain from following them further.

With regard to the individual of whom the Lord of Montcroullier's people were in quest (one L'Aunony), and after whom more than a hundred and twenty men had been despatched, in various directions:—they neither found him at the goatherd's cabin, nor in the most concealed caves and recesses among the hills, nor any where else. But he was still heard of, nevertheless; and it seems doubtful whether he was not seen: for an old decrepit broken-down peasant, of the name of Sacy, a vine-dresser, who, as people said, had once travelled much, seen the world, and known better days, made some positive assertions to that effect—however little he might have been attended to. He was a vassal of the Lord of Montcroullier, and happened to know both the person and the character of L'Aunony:—though, that the latter was the object of the late search and stir through-

out the domain—he, certainly, did *not* know.

Now this person brought himself incautiously into serious peril, by affirming that, at a late hour on a certain evening, in the valley, immediately beneath the chapel of St. Mark, he had seen Thibaud L'Aunony in earnest discourse with the Sieur de Varogne.

No one, generally speaking, cared whether he had or not. But Sir Guy himself appeared to take this somewhat amiss; and proved that he did so by his subsequent conduct.

He sent for poor old Sacy; gave him to understand that he was a dotard, a fool, and a liar; and just hinted, that if any body thought fit to spread reports of his encouraging a man of evil reputation—he should order his tongue to be torn from his throat, if he did not perform the feat with his own hands.

Meanwhile, the days wore on wofully at the castle of Montcroullier: and it was noised abroad, that the Baron had com-

pletely sunk under his misfortunes; that his mind was fast giving way, and his body could not long hold out. This news reached the Dame D'Altdorf, a high-born lady, of much stateliness and dignity, in the north-western part of the kingdom; between whose family and that of Montcroullier had long subsisted a close alliance, and sacred hereditary friendship. The Lady of Altdorf and Largentières, therefore (for one was the name of her race and the other of her residence), bethought her, that some exertion was especially required, at this mournful season, in favour of the representative of the ancient friends of her house. And, without at all considering how the Baron might be benefited by such a step on her part,—or rather imagining that her presence must of necessity work miracles for him, she set out, with all the parade of those times, from Picardy: and, consuming nearly a year's revenue upon the expedition,—arrived within the walls of Montcroullier, in the following order of march.

First, three gentlemen at arms passed the bridge, attired in garments of a purplish pink, faced with black, and mounted on mules, with furniture of sables. Next, two ecclesiastics, maintained in her household, —also riding upon mules. Then, three very diminutive pages, exalted upon immensely high black steeds, with snow-white housings. Then, the lady's seneschal; then her almoner; each advancing singly. Next came the Dame D'Altdorf herself, on a beautiful cream-coloured palfrey, adorned with purple and gold, to which the robes of the lady exactly corresponded. Then, in a more irregular manner, a body of archers, whose light green attire was also faced with black. And, lastly—for inns and supply on the road for such a cavalcade were, in that age, extremely precarious—two large covered carts, which closed the procession; the one laden with meat and biscuit,—the other with fish, some salted, and some fresh, which had been procured upon the route.

The Baron of Montcroullier thought, that if any thing had been wanting to fill up the measure of his affliction, it was this visitation from the Lady of Largentières:—but, in truth, it did him good. The exertions, which so formidable an attention and serious an honour demanded, drew him from dwelling upon his own misfortunes, and mainly contributed to the restoration of sound mind, which, by degrees, he now acqu' l. Hunting, hawking, and feats of arms were resorted to, with a view of amusing the lady: and in less than three weeks after her arrival, ensued the splendid christening of Sir Guy de Varogne's infant, and only daughter. So passed off the visit of this dignified and venerable personage: and in much the same mode was the solemn attention subsequently returned by the Baron, and his kinsman De Varogne.

But as little happened worth recording for a space of fourteen years after this period; and as the next important events took place in the immediate vicinity of the

Dame D'Altdorf's abode—it may be as well to suppose that interval altogether elapsed; and to proceed with some account of her part of the country, and the state of people and things thereabout.

CHAPTER III.

The village of Largentières, situated between thirty and forty miles to the northwest of Amiens, on the border of the province of Picardy, has changed its name, more than once, since the days treated of in this story. Some say, that the last alteration occurred very recently indeed—so lately as during the earlier part of the French revolution. But the better opinion seems to be, that the present and modern appellation has prevailed ever since the war of the Spanish succession, at the beginning of the last century.

There is little ground to doubt, however, that the place, while it went by its original name—which name (Largentières) will here be constantly preserved—was of far more extent and importance than it has ever subsequently been, or will be: for which conjecture, out of many good rea-

sons, one may be held quite sufficient, whatever may have been the cause of the various changes of appellation. The chateau, which adjoined, and gave celebrity to the village, was unfortunately demolished in a revolutionary tumult, by a mob of regenerated and crazy rustics, somewhere between the first of March and middle of April, in the year seventeen hundred and ninety-one.

But long before that time, the Chateau de Largentières had declined considerably from its primitive grandeur; although the days had been when it was a post of first-rate consequence in the north of France. —First, the stronghold of one of those powerful and intractable chieftains who so frequently set the crown at defiance. Afterwards, a respectable national fortress, in the king's own hands:—and, lastly, of inferior aspect, and with diminished means, both for defence and annoyance, it constituted the residence of a noble

family, of German extraction, on whom the domain had been conferred by King Philip the Fair. Thenceforward, after many hazards and fluctuations, the castle had remained in the hands of different individuals of the same race, till about the commencement of the fourteenth century; when it devolved upon a female, the Dame D'Altdorf, mentioned in the last chapter. She was a prudent, though a very proud woman; she had the discretion to employ people of sense in her household; and, despite of her sex, and comparatively straitened resources, she managed, by a happy mixture of hauteur and affability, pomp, and subsequent economy, to live there as became her descent, through many years of that turbulent period, so abundant, indeed, in professions of devotion to the gentler sex, and in chivalric enterprize on their behalf; but in reality, and ordinary practice, so utterly lawless towards them and every body else.

While this lady flourished, as mistress of Largentières and the adjacent domain, her dwelling was completely surrounded by a deep running stream, which, at that time, formed the moat: but, according to tradition, the castle had formerly extended, on one side, far beyond that boundary.

A stagnant melancholy swamp, sometimes entirely overflowed with water, at others displaying a surface of long dark-green rushes and sickly grass, bent down by mud, covered some acres of ground to the westward. On the scite of this marsh, as the peasants of the neighbourhood reported, had stood the west wing and principal outworks of the fortress; and, by their account, the swamp had been created in after-ages, by the attempt—very awkwardly executed—to divert the ancient course of the stream which had once contributed to defend the whole range of building, into its present more contracted channel. Several low but

pleasant meadows adjoining to the marshy ground, relieved the view, from the centre of the edifice; while the eye was still further gratified, towards the eastern extremity, by the commencement of an immense wood, which, as it receded from the castle and small town of Largentières, appeared to overspread by degrees the whole country around.

Every Sunday was then (as it is now, throughout France and most of the Netherlands) a day primarily of devotion; but after that duty,—not one of recreation merely, but of positively active sports and pastime: and Trinity Sunday, in the year 1346, being a particularly fine genial day, had drawn together, in the meadows near the skirt of this wood, a great concourse of the villagers, of all ages.

After disporting themselves in front of the chateau, during part of the forenoon, and for many hours beyond it:—the more elderly people had retired from the scene;

still leaving, however, a good many, of both sexes, upon the ground; most of them absolute children; and all decidedly entitled to be styled juvenile. A laughing lively joyous party, consisting of four or five maidens, about this time—it was now towards six in the evening—disengaged themselves from the crowd; and accompanied by a couple of young men, sought for some variety in their diversions, by a ramble into the wood.

Whether people reason upon their feelings, or not, whether people can explain their feelings, or not, there is surely something congenial to most natures in forest scenery. To follow the devious and apparently interminable glades, uncertain whither we may be exactly tending, but confident of increasing pleasure the further we explore, and whatever new aspect the country around us may suddenly assume—will go a great way towards reconciling us to almost any companion: while, to contem-

plative solitude, such scenes are still better suited. Nor have they fewer charms for a party of happy young men and women, well pleased with themselves, each other, and every thing about them, such as those who now, shouting and frolicking, entered the wood together. They gathered wild flowers, they looked for bird's nests, they romped, sang, and chattered; and, without any definite object to lead them on, got farther and farther from the village: till one of the girls, who had slipped into a different track, with a view of hiding herself, and surprising the others, when they should happen to be near her—came now running up to the rest again, in very great haste, and not without considerable trepidation. Having communicated some piece of information, she pointed in the direction from whence she had just returned.

"A fig for him, by day-light! even although his black master were close at his heels," said one of the young men.

"Hush, Claude—hush. How dar'st thou give thy tongue such liberty?" cried all the girls, at the same instant.

"But did he, truly, cross the path pretty near thee, Manon?" said he.

The girl nodded, but seemed in no disposition to be playful about the matter.

"I knew not that we were near the caitiff's den:—neither are we, I am positive," said the other lad.

"Prithee hold thy tongue," cried several of the females again. "'Tis foolishness to talk so, when none of us can tell who or what may be ever so close at hand!"

"Didst hear him speak, Manon?" continued the first inquirer.

"No: our Lady be thanked. Nor did he see me, as I think: but I saw him full plainly; better than I could have wished."

"The old one, was it? or the son?" said Claude, once more.

"'Twas Gaspard Grimmfer his own self."

"Aye! In sooth, did ye?" he replied: then, addressing himself to the other young

man in company, "Hearken, Jaques; thou art a leaper, a hand-ball player, a marksman, and a wrestler, the best of thy inches. But suppose I should ask thee, just now, to follow old Gaspard, along with me, and exchange a few words with him? Would'st venture to the old serpent's hole; and take a fair look at him, face to face? Many a tale have we all heard of thy daring feats—and from thine own mouth, lad. Now, what dost say to that?"

"Ah, mercy, mercy!" cried Manon; ye can not think—ye do not think of leaving us here! Good heaven! you can not mean it?"

"And well do ye know," added another of the women, "that nothing which the whole kingdom of France can give, should persuade us to go on one step farther into the wood, at this late hour of the evening."

"Whatever my friend Claude may undertake," said Jaques, prodigiously relieved and encouraged by his absolute

certainty that the females, in their present disposition, would never permit either of them to leave the spot—"Whatever the gallant Claude may be bold enough to undertake — — he will find me, I am willing to hope, not only ready to engage in, but forwarder than himself."

Here ensued more vehement outcries from their companions than ever; accompanied by such serious resistance to the proposal, that—with infinite blustering, gabble, and vapouring, both the young men kept up at as round a pace as the girls —if the former did not even take the lead; and the whole party hastened back to the crowd upon the lawn, who still lingered there, unwilling that their sports should terminate.

They were as yet by no means satiated with diversion, although it was now absolutely twilight, and a twilight too of a very unpleasing description. The black embattled clouds gathering together from the south, had overspread the whole face of

the sky, excepting a small portion in the western quarter, still refulgent from the sun, which had recently gone down,—but glowing with such a deep red, menacing, and lurid hue, as proclaimed a disastrous night. A body of French peasantry, however, particularly of young French peasantry, were not to be interrupted in their enjoyments by an impending change of weather.

"Go on till it is quite dark," they cried: "Go on, till it gets too dark to play;" and a general game of "hunting the stag" was forthwith suggested, approved, and carried into execution.

The youth, who, from his acknowledged excellence in running, took upon him the important part of the stag—considered it, of course, a point of honour to baffle his pursuers, till night-fall should put an end to the chase. He, therefore, made directly for the wood: but his plan of operations was not attended with the full anticipated success. The brambles impeded him;

while some of the followers, who could not indeed run so fast, but better understood the nature of the ground, availed themselves of that knowledge to keep him pretty constantly in view—no easy achievement, with the very scanty light that remained—and were once on the point of coming up with him.

Thus pressed, the quarry doubled: and, darting down a path immediately on his left hand, seemed likely again to have distanced them all—when he suddenly stopped short, and making signs to his pursuers that they must go on no further that way—suffered himself to be taken. "There—there—you have me. Save your souls!—do make less noise," said he, as the first two or three came up, shouting and whooping: "D'ye see where we have got to?" No one, at that moment, but himself, probably did: but they soon perceived that they were almost beneath an overhanging bank, formed like the mouth of a large cavern; against the side of which was raised

a turf cot, with no visible entrance, though there was an opening in the wall, near the top of this strange edifice, which seemed designed for a window. But as something of a dark nature was spread behind the aperture, just at present, nobody could gain the least insight to the recesses of the place.

"Holy St. Michael!" cried one of the hunting party; "who would have thought of your leading us hither!"

"Ye pressed me so hard," said the lad who had been figuring as the deer, "that I mistook my way altogether; and ran blindly down into the very jaws of this hellish hole, when I supposed I was right in the path that leads toward Lower Auxy."

"Stand firm, my masters," said one Pierre Lasalle. "Stand your ground. This is not the first time, by some ten or a dozen, that I have been as near him. In the dead of the night too; all by my own-self; and not a soul within a league of me, but the foul dog there, and his whelp.

Stand firm, boys, a-breast of me. His ugly looks I value no more than a frown from my grandame. What! are we to scour off like sheep, or slink away like thievish curs —and with such a goodly number in company? The saints forbid, say I! Let him come out: he hath more to fear from us than we from him. We have the cleaner consciences, I trow."

"By night, say'st thou?" cried another fellow; "hast been this way in the night-time? Now by my troth, that visit might have been more à propos. The old devil's company is not much to my fancy, I must needs confess. But as for the young one, whom I take to be near about my own age—let him turn out, and take a bout with me at quarter-staff, leaping, pitching the bar, shooting at the quintain, or—any thing else that's like to try either our strength or agility:—let it be sport, or let it be earnest—as he listeth, for that: and all the folk in Picardy, young and old, gentle and simple, men and women, shall have my

free leave, to stand by and witness the strife."

"Nay, nay; keep the women away, Hilaire," said a well-looking middle-aged man, in a fustian doublet, "unless thou would'st wish to be baffled and disgraced, before thine own sweetheart. Trust me—the youngster is more than thy match. He cometh not too often amongst us—'tis true: but—when he doth come, let the best wrestler within ten leagues of Largentières look to his footing; and the best staff-player to his crown."

"Hang him and his prowess!" replied Hilaire. "Dost think that I should turn my back to an imp of that accursed brood! He is of an evil stock, I tell thee; and, only that he ought not to be suffered to mix with us, whom Holy Church acknowledgeth and receiveth in her all-protecting ———"

His next neighbour here called off his attention by a stout nudge, or rather knock, with his elbow; at the same time directing

it to a light which just then began to twinkle through the window which they were all watching. At sight of this phenomenon, the whole crowd receded some paces, in considerable disorder: nor was their confusion and consternation diminished, by a blaze of lightning—-a perfect sheet of fire—which, at that moment, played over the woods, and seemed to descend upon and envelope the whole company. It was succeeded by darkness, profound and instantaneous,—and by such a peal of thunder as had not been heard within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the village.

There needed no more to put our merry-makers, one and all, to the rout. They ran, in utter dismay, on every point: and the shouting and execrations of the men, the smashing and riving of the underwood, the screams of some females, and prayers and supplications of others, mingled with the shrill whistling of the wind and roaring of almost incessant thunder—-might have given

any one possessed of a moderate share of imagination—an idea of a forest haunted by demons, to whose malice certain guilty individuals of the human race had been devoted for their offences. In truth, the storm raged with unexampled fury. In less than ten minutes, from its commencement, the hues of evening had given place to a darkness like midnight; and the wind had increased to an absolute hurricane. Some of the trees most remarkable for their size throughout all that part of the country, were hurled to the earth: and though those of feebler growth might escape destruction, by bending before the blast—the ground was literally covered with their shreds and branches.

The grass in the meadows lay beaten down, soaked, and crushed into one immense morass; and, for many a mile, all the expected fruits of the year were annihilated by the hail, which fell in large angular pieces of solid ice. Such indeed was the power of the tempest, that many of those

who fled from the wood, women more especially, unable to keep their feet, fell down among the dripping bushes, drenched, terrified, and weak as infants; expecting the worst; and making no kind of effort to recover themselves.

From a situation of this very unpleasant nature, were two of these maidens extricated, by a young man, dressed in a plain stout leathern jerkin, of enormous thickness, coarse cloth hose, and immense wooden shoes, made quite sharp at the toe, and fastening above the ankle. He had a sort of tippet or mantle about his shoulders, which being drawn above them, formed a hood, and also defended his head, which was additionally aided by a rusty looking cap, without any brim, whose only ornament had been long ago carried away by the wind. "Albeit I may but ill spare the time," said he, when he had set both the damsels upon their legs again; "yet, if you feel that you cannot readily get home without my assistance,—you shall, doubt-

less, command it. Are ye sisters? Are ye single women, abiding with your parents? and to what part of the village do you belong?"

"Thank thee, ten thousand thousand times! Heaven's blessing aye be with thee," said one of the girls, "for this offer, of as true Christian charity as ever yet was made by man."

"Good Sir, may our Lady's grace never forsake you and yours to the end of the world," cried the other. "This is a deliverance; this is a piece of luck indeed. Come, Babiche, let us each take an arm of the worthy kind gentleman."

"That will I," said Babiche; "for methinks I know him now; and pleased I am to say, that we shall not lead Rodolphe so much out of his own way neither; that is, if he be going strait home: and, in a night like this, he must be either a fool or a madman if he is not."

"For whom do you take me, young woman?" said their protector.

"Nay, do not stand playing the fool," she replied; "for Rodolphe Borque, to be sure."

"You are wrong then," said he; "nobody throughout France or Flanders could be more prompt than myself to assist ye both; but my name is Eustace Grimmfer."

At this information, the girl uttered a scream; a louder one, if possible, than any of her distresses had extorted from her before; and ran off, homeward, as fleetly as if, instead of having been exhausted by a whole day's diversion, and knocked down and sorely bruised at the end of it—she had, just at that moment, made her first appearance upon the green, in full vigour and activity.

"With ease could I overtake her, were I the formidable and malignant being, that many of you suppose me to be,"—said the young man to the other female, whom her companion had thus abandoned to his mercy; "but I force my good offices upon no one: and should you—Agnes Reda, if I

mistake not—also decline my services, and wish me away; I shall quickly be gone at your bidding."

"Many kind thanks to thee, Monsieur Grimmfer," replied the girl, "for helping me out of the mud; and for all you have done already: I shall remember it to my dying day. In good truth I shall. Yet still, Sir;—pray pardon me, Sir; I am but a simple lass—and folks do tell such strange tales, that —— ———."

"You had rather I should leave you, Agnes? Good night then."

He turned from her with the sigh of a heavy heart; and soon made his way into a more remote part of the wood, completely behind the whole tribe of scattered peasants, whose cries and various uproar became now scarcely distinguishable.

CHAPTER IV.

But the adventures of the night had not terminated for Eustace Grimmfer. He had reached, indeed, a broad track, where his course was somewhat less impeded; but his present situation, to any other than one thoroughly conversant with the forest, might have been every whit as perilous as the worst places that he had hitherto passed.

Unless when aided by the lightning, he could not see to the distance of two feet before him; and all along the track, close upon one side of the path, extended a trench, or rather ravine, of very considerable depth, at the bottom of which flowed, ordinarily, a scanty rivulet; but it was now swelled to a rapid and dangerous stream, as, by the continued rush of the flood, on his right hand, he was full well apprized. The storm by this time seemed in a degree to have subsided; and in the

intervals between the thunder, a dead stillness prevailed, only interrupted by the gurgling of the waters, and the splash of the rain, which had succeeded, fortunately, to that formidable and tremendous hail. In one of these pauses, he could not but imagine that he heard the tread of a horse; and thought it approached him; but no certainty could be attained for some minutes afterwards, owing to the renewed rattling of the thunder, followed by a gust of wind, before which, every tree, within a league from the spot, bowed nearly to the earth.

Another comparative silence succeeding, convinced Eustace that his former notion had been well founded; and the sound of the horses hoofs appeared, by this time, to be so very near upon him, that he was fain hastily to dodge behind the trunk of a great tree, lest he should be borne down. Now, likewise, he could distinguish the voice of a man, endeavouring, in a fretful and desponding sort of whine, to urge the

animal on. At this juncture, a sheet of lightning which Eustace could almost fancy he felt, fully discovered the parties to each other; and blazed in the eyes of horse and men; so greatly to the annoyance of the former, that he stopped short, reared, and backed, immediately over the edge of the path; insomuch that the next step must, inevitably, have plunged both him and his riders, (for two of them there were,) into the ravine—had not young Grimmfer sprung towards them; seized hold of the bridle, close to the horses mouth; and led him forward into the middle of the track, where he stood quite still, panting and trembling. "If thou art a robber," said the person who rode behind, "take what we have, and assure thyself, that no resistance will be attempted. But spare the lives, of a female little used, alas! to such crosses and perils as she has gone through to-day; and of an inoffensive, faithful old man."

"As to your lives," returned Eustace,

"ye ill comprehended your late situation, or you would scarcely suspect me of a design upon *them;* and Heaven knows I have as little upon your purses. Take heart, take heart. The worst of the storm appears to be over; and I will lead your horse some way forward, till he hath passed the most dangerous point."

"I doubt," said the front horseman, "we were in no small jeopardy but now. There is an aukward descent, I am apt to think, on that side of the road?"

"Rather so; as you would soon have found," replied the young man; and, by my halidame, I cannot guess, now, who is to keep you out of further mischief, if, as I conjecture, ye are strangers in these parts, and still resolve to proceed."

"Strangers, unluckily for us, we are, no doubt;" said the other; "but, if you could help us to any shelter, be it ever so homely, hereabout,—we be none so mad as to determine on going forward to-night. Canst aid us, my friend, in this mishap?"

"I am sorry to say, that I cannot."

"Why, the pest!" resumed the horseman, "thou art not, surely, roaming about the country for thy pleasure, in the middle of all this fire and water, hail and tempest? Thou must have a home somewhere, man!"

"None, that I can offer to share with you," said the other, decidedly.

"Alack! we are wandering here, in consequence of their false directions," observed the female. "Had the information which we obtained this afternoon been well meant and honest—we should long ere this time have arrived at the Chateau de Largentières."

"Aye! and is that your mark?" returned the youth; "so near are ye, then, to Largentières, that you may rather attribute your not having reached it before, to the dangers and difficulties of this fearful night, than to any falsehood on the part of those who directed you. And yet," (speaking thoughtfully,) the remainder of

your way is none so clear, but ye may meet with many a disaster still."

"If so, my good fellow," said the man, "thou hast only to guide us, thyself, to the chateau; in order to secure a reward, which would not be equalled by the wages of a fortnight's labour."

"You know not what you speak of," replied Eustace; "my time is demanded, and too much of it hath been consumed here, even now."

"May I beseech you, worthy sir, who hast done so greatly for us already, and perhaps been the preserver of both our lives," said the female, "may I implore, unless such an act of humanity should be attended with any serious loss or inconvenience, that thou wouldst be pleased to point out to us the remainder of our route —a very short distance, by your own account—or, at least have the charity to conduct us into a more safe and open track."

There was something in the last speaker's tone of voice, more persuasive to

Eustace Grimmfer, than all the promises of her companion. He reflected for an instant, grasped the bridle of their jaded steed, and, without more hesitation, trudged forward vigorously, amid the thanks and blessings of the travellers. "You will find that I spoke not at random,"—observed Eustace, when by the glimmering of a few stars, and the faint, shadowy appearance of objects around them, it grew evident that they were nearly at the end of the wood—"in affirming, that the storm had abated; see! mark that flash! how much paler it hath become! and the lightning is now confined to the higher regions of the air!"

"True," replied the female; "the thunder too, though still awful, is manifestly more distant."

"Shouldst thou be a damsel of gentle condition," observed their conductor, "as by thy voice and language, lady, I am strongly disposed to believe; pardon, I pray, my somewhat rude bearing, and too familiar speech."

"I wish for nothing so much, and so sincerely," she cried, "as a suitable opportunity of testifying my gratitude to one, who hath befriended me in so essential a manner, and at so important a time. That is ——" she added, having apparently spoken rather hastily and unadvisedly,— "inasmuch as a servant maiden, as an humble menial, may have the means of rewarding such services. But the Dame D'Altorf is about to receive me into her family; she hath protected me from my childhood; and will assuredly do, what I am desirous, but incapable, of performing." The rest of this speech was uttered in so low a voice, that the words aid, benevolence, and generosity, could alone be heard; and neither party attempted any further remarks, till their guide struck his staff upon a bastion of one of the small towers which flanked the outermost gate of the mansion. "So! Halt we here," said he; "there is a light, yet, on the other side of the water. They cannot,

therefore, be all in bed; though the folk on this side seem asleep or dead, every one of them." With this observation, he began to shout away and halloo; but the man upon the horse which he was leading stopped him, saying, "Nay, my friend, I have the best means of making myself heard by them. So do thou just help down my young ——; pish!—just help the young woman down, will ye?" That piece of attention had been performed, and performed respectfully, almost before it was suggested; and, wishing them good repose, Eustace Grimmfer began to hurry away. "Be not so hasty, young man, I beg and beseech thee;" said she; "For, however lightly you may estimate the aid you have afforded me,—I feel, that I have an obligation to repay of more than common ——."

"Excuse me," cried Eustace, "I am wanted elsewhere. Besides, your attendant here hath begun to blow his horn; the people of the castle will be stirring imme-

diately; and there are reasons—they signify not, however,—but I ought to have been far from hence for several hours past."

"But accept this ring, my good friend, it hath some value—and may benefit thee and thy family, more than thou art aware of."

"A valuable ring, lady," he gravely replied, forcing the present back into her hands, "is rather an unusual gift, for a *waiting maid*." So saying, he darted from them and was instantly out of sight. In the next moment, from the further extremity of the bridge within, a light flashed upon the massy gate, announcing that Sir Porter was up, and, with as much celerity as generally belonged to his tribe, coming across, to answer the call of the travellers.

Meanwhile, the youth who had so mainly assisted them returned to the wood, running every step of the way; for equally well could he traverse it, at all times, during the twenty-four hours; and when

forced, at length, to slacken his pace and take breath—he groaned aloud; either in consequence of having been detained so long from home, on that particular night, or because of the dreadfully repulsive course, and dreary prospects, of his life altogether.

After some intricate windings, in order to shorten the way; after many struggles, in low ground always covered with weeds and brambles, but now become marshy likewise;—and plunges among puddles, which were almost ponds; he arrived in front of that hollow in the rock, and the miserable habitation erected just within the mouth of the chasm, which recently have been mentioned. He saw the same light through the window or air-hole, which, in conjunction with the thunder storm, had so scared the villagers on its first appearance: but Eustace, seemingly, was expected, and his footstep recognized. The light, for a moment, was withdrawn from the window; and from the profound darkness which

then enveloped the spot, a sound issued expressive of impatience and rage. The young man moved round the extremity of this uncouth building—if building it might be called—and passing along a narrow alley formed between the dwelling and the hill, approached the place, just at the point where it fell back, to the very side of the cavern, and extended itself to the rock for support. He stooped low, and from thence immediately stepping forward, entered a narrow, squalid, dismal apartment, with an unequal roof, which gradually shelved down on one side, from a ceiling level only for a very small space—and ended abruptly on the other; the opposite side of the chamber being formed by the perpendicular rock. This sordid and deplorable domicile was lighted by a single lamp; furnished with two oaken settles, and as many wretched truckle beds; and contained a few manuscripts, various phials of fluids, in general, very highly coloured; an entire human skeleton; the head of a

man with the hair on, in ghastly preservation, and some dried and shrunken bodies of monsters, none very large, and most of them marine. On one of the seats, with a dead animal before him, of the lizard kind as it seemed, which he was employed in dissecting, sat an elderly man, but of a tall and shapeless figure, wrapped round in a white, loose, heavy, incommodious garment, which sometimes fell down over his fingers ends, and then, left his arm naked, nearly to the shoulder,—more like a thick blanket than any other sort of covering.

It descended to his very feet, and was secured about him by a broad belt, on which the strangest characters were engraven, in the nature of hieroglyphics; resembling nothing, however, that one can imagine in heaven; and, most certainly like nothing on earth beneath. His head was covered, quite down to the ears, by a sort of cap which permitted not a single hair, black, white, or grey, to escape; and the brim of it, curling upwards, rose above

his head to a considerable height, and in a perfect and delicate point.

This engaging personage had no sooner cast a glance upon the young man, than he gnashed his teeth, clenched his fists, and held them stretched out towards him, with all the symptoms of ungovernable fury; then seizing upon an earthen porringer which stood on a shelf at hand,—he hurled it at his head, with so hearty a good will and dangerous an aim, that the vessel slightly grazed him as it passed, and was dashed to pieces against an angle of the wall. "Such treatment only serves to convince me," observed Eustace, "that what, on more than one occasion, you have indirectly acknowledged, is surely true; notwithstanding your subsequent disavowal of your own words."

"Miscreant!" cried Grimmfer, worked into tenfold wrath by his last remark, "thou hast repeated that falsehood solely to irritate me. Thou knowest that thou hast foully lied. Wouldst disown thy pa-

rent, ungracious whelp? Who but a father, think ye, would have imposed upon himself the burthensome and disgusting slavery of storing thy mind and improving thy faculties from puling childhood to thy present age;—fretted by thy stubbornness, wearied by thy dulness, but persevering, through every discouragement? Who but a father would have imparted to thee such rare knowledge as no other of thine own own degree, so much as conceiveth the existence of — — and would yet be ready, were it not for thine intractably base and stupid perverseness, to teach thee, the still rarer secrets of which he is sole master? A murrain on thee! on thy spiritless indolence and grovelling mind! The tempest is hushed; the eastern sky already brighteneth; but through the whole of this busy night, hast thou been gadding abroad, betraying thy father, and abandoning thy duty."

"It never could have entered into my imagination," replied the younger of the

two, "to have questioned my consanguinity and consequent dependance upon you, but for your own acknowledgment; but for admissions, voluntary, unsolicited, and unexpected;—when and where thrown out—you full well remember. Be it supposed, however, that we may, in certain points, have misunderstood each other—still, more than eighteen summers have now passed over my head; and with all due gratitude for your protection, and instructions, however administered, and however enforced; I claim a right to seek my own fortunes in the world; to resist the being made a bondman and hopeless thrall, by any human being: and that right—prepare yourself for the event—will, ere long, be exerted."

"Provoke me not," said the old man, with a most inauspicious scowl; "wilt thou defy thy parent, Eustace?"

"Heaven forefend it; but let us not deal in mysterious threats on the one hand, or professions of fidelity on the other. Be

open; be intelligible; and declare, what are the services which you now require of me."

"I would, first, have thee lay aside thy foolish and impracticable notions of independence. Impracticable, because thou sharest with me the dread and hatred of the ignorant creatures around us,—and foolish, because our mutual interest requireth our mutual exertions. Thou mayest, perhaps, imagine, boy, that the knowledge which thou hast gained from me, is a sufficient stock, for thyself to set up in the world upon. But I have taught thee trifles; I have, as yet, taught thee nothing. Continue for a while subservient to thine only benefactor; and in thy turn, thou shalt agitate the ocean at thy pleasure, and command the spirits of the air."—— Eustace retreated a few steps and appeared to meditate a still further retreat.

"Thou art about to leave me then;" cried Grimmfer: "once attempt it—and, by all the angels of darkness, thou shalt also leave this world, before the sun is over the

village of Largentières."—Whether it might have been the remains of awe, for one who had governed him hitherto, though with the most harsh and tyrannical sway; or a doubt yet subsisting, whether old Grimmfer were entitled to filial respect from him; or a certain belief in his supernatural powers, and consequent horror at his threats;—but for one or all of those reasons, Eustace hesitated, and felt appalled.

"Sit thee down, boy," said the old man; "I have employment for thee. But before we begin — —" He stopped; removed the sackcloth which hung before the window of his habitation, and placed himself thereat, for several minutes; during which time, the apprehensions of Eustace, aroused by his excited imagination, induced him to believe that he had heard some words pronounced, from without the dwelling—in a low, plaintive, and very singular tone. Grimmfer then turned about to him; and went on with what he had been saying. "Before we begin a course

of study, which, till lately, thou hast been too young to undertake; and for which, few minds, it may be admitted, are readily prepared—tell me truly. Can thy forbearance and discretion be confided in, as well as thy firmness? for thy ordinary courage I have no cause to question."

"I feel myself somewhat exhausted, Father," replied Eustace, "having neither ate nor drank since the mid-day chimes of St. Lazare. The night, too, is wearing apace; and unless I get a little sleep, I shall scarcely be equal to go on your message—two leagues, I think, beyond Auxy—to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said the old man, in vexation, "I shall need thee not. Sleep *then*, if you list, for twelve hours at a stretch, sound as a toad in the depth of winter. But, for the present, weigh well my words and observe me closely."

"I am almost famished," replied the youth, "and must, at least, have some

meat and drink, before I can give my mind to any thing."

"Simple glutton that thou art," cried his impatient instructor, yield me but thy present attention;—and such a banquet shall await thee, as the city of Paris would be incompetent to furnish."

"I cry you mercy, Father;—but if such treats be at thy disposal; how cometh it, that our general fare is so coarse and homely?"

"Surely, thou art not rash enough to be trifling with me," said the old man, "beware lest you fret me beyond endurance. For our daily fare—what satisfieth nature sufficeth for me. I live not to gormandize: but to bring about those great ends, which shall shortly be accomplished. Art listening, idiot?"

"Aye. Full well do I heed thee," returned the lad, who, by this time, had considered his own situation, and determined upon his conduct; "and should my reply be adverse to your wishes—bear

with me; and control those passions, from which you, yourself, ever are, and must be, the principal sufferer. Who or from whence I am; whether I had ever a friend in the world besides yourself; and whether—though for much I may be indebted to you—I really owe you a filial gratitude; whatever, upon these subjects, I may suspect,—to you the truth is known. In some points, I must always, perforce, be your debtor. You have given me a home; and, as I cannot but have discovered in my slight intercourse with the peasantry of the neighbourhood, a degree of education, far, indeed, superior to theirs. Much more you are able to teach me, doubtless; but, to be plain,—I have no desire to be instructed in all your secrets. What mighty benefit, allow to inquire, have they ensured to thee? We live here in squalid poverty, perhaps feared, certainly abandoned, and detested by mankind; and although I have hitherto borne this banishment from the society of my fellow-creatures, with what

patience I might — — forgive me, when I say, that your perturbation of mind, neglect of natural rest, and perpetual gloom, argue but a scanty portion of happiness, either in possession or prospect."

"Insensate fool," cried Grimmfer, "shall we proceed to sport, while our task be unfinished! Thou talkest indeed of filial obligation;—but gratitude showeth itself otherwise than in words, and those insolent, perverse, and disobedient. I tell thee then—if thou dost despise the treasures of wisdom—that it is for mine own sake, for my proper welfare and advantage, that I demand thy present aid; and now, what return am I to expect?

"Employ me in any manner consistent with innocence and a clear conscience; and I will go to the world's end for thee."

"From whom hast thou learnt to prate about conscience?" said Grimmfer, his countenance changing from paleness to perfect blackness.

"I must be understood to say, that

some studies are perilous and unhallowed; and some knowledge, devilish;" replied Eustace firmly. But he began to fear that he had said too much. The old man's eyes sparkled like coals of fire; he grinned with malice; his nostrils were frightfully distended, and he attempted to speak; but his voice rattled, inarticulately, in the throat, and his words were lost. He pointed, or seemed to point, to the window; and Eustace was approaching it, with mixed feelings of resolution, wonder, and terror, when he heard a loud noise, as of something broken to pieces behind him; which was his preservation from some very serious, perhaps, irreparable injury.

In his haste to get to the window, with his mind wholly occupied, he had struck down from the shelf, one of the largest phials; and the floor was floated with a dark blue liquid, which frothed and smoked as it flowed along the ground. On turning round, upon this accident, Eustace beheld old Grimmfer close to him, mad

with passion, and brandishing an uplifted bar of iron in both his hands.

Not a moment was to be lost. He rushed in upon him; grasped him by the waist; and succeeded, though not without extreme difficulty, in confining his arms. After a short, but furious struggle, the elder Grimmfer, foaming at the mouth and howling like a demoniac, was thrown down upon his back, and pinioned to the ground by both wrists, which the other held fast, and stretched out beyond his head.

At length the senses of the fallen man seemed to be quite overpowered by unavailing rage. All at once, his cries and resistance ceased; and he lay motionless in a sort of fit.

Fortunately, this was not the first time that Eustace had seen him under an attack of this nature, brought on by his own transports of fury. No possible assistance from any other creature was to be procured; nor, had the distance between this

man's dwelling, and the town of Largentières, been far less than it was, would a single human being have ventured out—more particularly during the hours of darkness—to approach the dreaded Gaspard Grimmfer, whether he were waking or sleeping, dying or dead.

'Twas well, therefore, that his son (as Gaspard and all others called him,) knew, generally, what measures to take, and what remedies to apply. The latter were simple and at hand; but on no occasion had Eustace ever witnessed so alarming a seizure, and found the disorder so obstinate. The old man, having been removed to his bed, lay for more than two hours without stirring, and barely breathing; and as Eustace gazed upon his haggard and distorted face, he almost thought that he looked on a being of an order different from mankind.

He derived comfort now, as he had often done before, from his doubts (not rashly formed, but when once admitted not easily relinquished,) whether he him-

self bore any affinity to the horrible object before him.

There were likewise other, but less consolatory reflections, which in his present circumstances would obtrude themselves.

Nobody knew better than Eustace, what was the reputation of the Sage Grimmfer throughout all that country; though, his knowledge being superior, his credulity might not be quite equal to that of the inhabitants of Largentières; who, high and low, believed the old man to be either the evil principle embodied, or some subordinate demon sent upon this earth on the express service of the wicked one. Eustace had never, as yet, actually beheld in visible form any of those terrific ministers supposed to be attendant upon his father; but was nevertheless aware, that Gaspard made the fullest pretension to such powers; and indeed if he had not felt confident that he possessed them, very much of his constant and habitual deport-

ment would have been utterly inexplicable to his young dependent.

Eustace was aware, that his father had long ago withdrawn himself, for many years together, from his native land; and that after a course of severe application, fearful experiments, and tremendous discipline, he had returned to Europe, with such knowledge and capacity, as were more feared than envied, more abhorred than admired, and universally esteemed to be supernatural. Eustace also knew, that he had devoted himself, in his present seclusion, to studies of a similar description; and that he had prosecuted them, with unremitting labour,—with a degree of assiduity, which frequently appeared to have deranged his understanding.

While he watched the panting frame and convulsed features of the old man, Eustace pondered upon his strange career; and often threw a shuddering glance around him, more particularly towards the aperture, beneath which he had heard, or

fancied that he had heard, some being in communication with his father, that very night. More than once during these meditations he was troubled and alarmed by unusual sounds both beneath the window, and at the further end of the apartment within; but whenever he moved or altered the position of his seat, the sound (which it would have been difficult to have described at any time,) was diminished, or became totally inaudible.

Eustace, unable to sit still, took the lamp, which now burned but feebly, and looked around him in uneasiness and expectation of some painful and horrible disclosure; but several minutes having elapsed, with every thing quiet about him, he passed on to the door and from thence into the open air. To his great relief he now perceived that the dawn had made a considerable advance; and, as usual, the circumstances which before had so affected his imagination, were utterly disregarded, or explained away by some ready invention.

In a short time, when the day-light had penetrated to the interior of his abode —Gaspard Grimmfer began to move and to speak. But he spoke very little; for although Eustace had mortally offended him, by all that he had said, by all that he had done, and by all that he had refused to do, old Grimmfer was conscious, immediately on the return of his recollection, that his future fits of anger must be conducted by artifice, or satiated by sullenness and ferocity of manner alone; their last contest having convinced him, that the vigour which Eustace had now attained, would preclude, henceforward, all recourse to direct personal violence.

CHAPTER V.

For some months after this scene, the father and son went on together, without any ostensible alteration from their former habits. To the young man, however, things were materially mended: he was neither assailed, nor offensively menaced; neither was he abused, as heretofore, with all the virulence of a mind as powerful as it was malignant, for imputed neglect of what Gaspard might be disposed to call his duty. Still, his spirits were damped, by a stern, stubborn withholding, on the part of old Gaspard, of all communication; by an aspect ever malicious, as a fiend's; and by half-uttered sentences, not addressed to him, but of alarming import, particularly when coupled with what Eustace knew, or suspected, of the dark pretensions, secret studies, and dreadful powers of the elder Grimmfer.— The life of Eustace was more melancholy

and cheerless than perhaps had at any time fallen to the lot of a lad of his age, throughout the whole kingdom of France: nevertheless, his was the sort of temper which, although gentle, it has never yet been found practicable to subdue, or even easy to circumvent.

'Tis true, that by the peasantry of the neighbourhood he was usually reprobated and avoided, with nearly as much horror as his father:—but such is, and ever was, the communicativeness of young dispositions, young French dispositions especially, that some few knew him tolerably well, in spite of all their prejudices; and indeed, had Satan himself been permitted, in his own avowed person and character, to meet the lads and lasses of Largentières occasionally, and to mingle with their sports—it would have been much if many of them had not formed a degree of intimacy with him.

Now, a certain number of the boldest among the males (as, already, has been in-

timated) had not only ventured to accost Eustace Grimmfer when they fell in with him; but, proceeding, very naturally, from cautious experiment to audacity, had persuaded and encouraged him to try his hand at their rustic exercises; probably, in hopes of triumphing over, ridiculing, exposing, or even injuring the young man; and thus of revenging themselves, after a fashion, both upon him and his father, for the awe which they had inspired through all that country. But in these pastimes,—some of them sufficiently rough—the young Wizard (as they called him) made his own part abundantly good; and to whatever they might have attributed his superiority and successful efforts—all those who had witnessed them, united, ever afterwards, a considerable portion of respect and admiration with their habitual dread of him.

The additional freedom, moreover, which Eustace acquired about this time, and which he had maintained since his last eventful struggle with Gaspard Grimmfer, gave him

more opportunities of mixing with his fellow creatures—ominous as that contest was; and daily, indeed hourly; as he expected his liberty of action to be interrupted, by means, which seemed likely to be the more terrible the less they were comprehended.

He now, indeed, was oftener seen amongst the peasants; but he courted them now, no more than formerly; and still less did he fawn upon those of higher degree. The advantages, however, which he at present enjoyed, for roaming abroad, he by no means neglected; and if any of the people about chanced to address him with common kindness, he would return their civilities promptly, and in a manner which surprised all, and conciliated some. But a person there was, whose meetings with young Grimmfer became, by some casualty or other, so very frequent,—and when they did meet, they had so much to say, on both sides, that the Dame D'Altdorf, with her advisers, took a strong impression in favour

of confining one of the parties more strictly within the chateau; thinking, that, in such case, the *accidents* which produced these perpetual interviews, might be less likely to occur.

The individual thus watched and thwarted, went by the name of Jeannette in that great lady's household, and was considered as a servant, certainly; though one particularly favoured, in always having access to her mistress, and employment about her person.

The second time that Jeannette happened to fall in with Eustace Grimmfer, was on a summer evening, in the meadow to the eastward of the castle: and the circumstance of her being so ready to make acquaintance, and hold converse with one, supposed, by all, to be but too well versed in that art, which cannot be named without a participation in its guilt; and who was generally shunned, as if he scarce partook of the human nature— —could only be accounted for, by her having very recently

arrived in those parts. Although, to be sure, it should be added (and, perhaps, may not be difficult of explanation,) that notwithstanding the total darkness which had prevailed when Eustace first chanced to become acquainted with this damsel—they did, nevertheless, intuitively, or at any rate, almost instantly recognize each other when they met again :—and much had she to observe, of perils and mischances, during the night of the great thunder storm; of her helplessness, her distress, her deliverance, and her gratitude.

Jeannette, no doubt, was soon and duly apprised, how unworthily her condescension had been bestowed; how suspicious was the young man's mode of life, and how worse than obscure his parentage. Which representations having been made in vain, as there is too much reason to believe, from their repeated meetings, and the continued affability of the damsel—certain busybodies, who are to be found about every great lady, judged it meet to acquaint the

Dame D'Altdorf of her favourite's indiscreet conduct. The intelligence was first imparted to her by one of her principal women; who, though unmarried, can hardly be suspected of having been actuated by any envious motive, since she herself was only in her thirty-second year. But whether this decent person communicated the matter unskilfully; or whether the information itself so far discomposed the lady, as to exasperate her beyond her customary self-controul— —certain it is, that she, most ungratefully, vented her indignation upon the informant, by a slap, and a tolerably sharp one, too, in the face; observing, at the same time, that she was a spiteful minx, and the thing impossible. That position the other did not immediately contest, for fear of a second manual retort: but after withdrawing, in a lamentable huff, and abusing her lady in no measured terms, and the innocent Jeannette in far worse, to her own particular gossip, she solaced herself, by sending up some of the men of the

establishment, and among them the ancient serving-man who had escorted Jeannette thither, with a confirmation of her report.

Then it was, that, according to the tradition of her house, the Lady of Altdorf and Largentières gave free scope to an alarming fit of the sulks. She never spoke one word to a single individual for three entire days and nights. She rose at her usual time; she walked, according to her usual custom; that is to say, for an hour and three quarters, each day, up and down the centre alley of the three into which the garden within the moat was divided; she attended her usual meals, and with no perceptible loss of appetite; but speak, she never did. All waited anxiously for the moment, when a clap of thunder should succeed to so portentous a stillness. At length, on the fourth morning,—the same waiting-woman who first made the communication which had produced this awful effect, came into Jeannette's apartment,

with the consequential look of one who has news, whether good or bad, to proclaim.

"Save you, Mademoiselle Jeannette," said she.

"And you, too, Mademoiselle Gotton," replied Jeannette.

"I have to tell you," resumed the former, "that my lady's voice hath been heard at last."

"Hath it, my dear?" said Jeannette, without looking up, or altering her manner, or desisting, for an instant, from the work that she was employed in.

"Hath it, my dear!" repeated the senior maiden, with an air of more surprise than approbation! "That is composed and easy, I must needs say. Hark ye, Mademoiselle, she hath spoken to me. Aye:—and is like to speak to somebody else;—and that to some purpose. You must attend her forthwith, in the oaken cabinet: and I would not be in thy skin, mistress, for the best new coif in Picardy."

"That may scarcely be," my good wo-

man, "till I shall have finished what I am about."

"Now, so heaven mend me," said Margot, walking away to the window, "as the impertinence of this minion is beyond all bearing. I never yet saw such airs: I never heard of such! and wherefore is it, that I cannot talk to her in her own strain—with her "my dear," and "my good woman,"—and the rest of her sauciness! But, whatever she may venture upon, it will hardly suit me to be braving my lady's anger:—so, just listen to me, young madam. On any other occasion, you might follow your own humours, for me, and take the consequence: but, at present, my orders are to send you to my lady's apartment; and if you go not, I shall be blamed."

"True, Gotton," said the other, laughing; "yet, surely, thou mayest comprehend the high satisfaction of finishing what one has long been about, and nearly got through with?"

"In faith, I do know that," returned Margot.

"Thou mayest appreciate my good nature then, in leaving mine own work undone, lest I should bring thee into trouble."

So saying, she folded up her piece of tapestry with the utmost sang froid, and obeyed the high commands which she had received; though not without stopping (for more than a minute at each) before two windows, which looked into the larger quadrangle of the castle, as she passed them before she could reach the oaken cabinet. She found the Dame D'Altdorf on her knees, in front of a stately desk, whereon stood a missal, of vellum, curiously emblazoned, and richly illumined, between a pair of carved griffon's heads, hideous in aspect, and frowning, or rather grinning hostility upon all who approached the lady at her devotions. However, she thought proper to rise, on Jeannett's entrance; and drawing towards her one of the rich but faded chairs, with which the closet was furnished,

she made the girl a sign, to be seated also; and addressed her in these words. "I never profess what I do not feel: and such is the warmth of my natural disposition, that I never can feel deeply, without affording very strong, and sometimes, I fear, very unwise proofs thereof. For example: I possess a god-child, who, having been distinguished from her tenderest years by my particular affection, hath chosen to abuse it, till it is become quite a weakness: and, to pass over a thousand minor incidents in which she hath presumed upon my indulgence——she hath, at last, so encroached upon my fondness for her, as to request positive aid from me, in an act of disobedience to her own father. Nay, she hath not merely besought, but verily obtained my countenance to her concealment—a timid and odious measure, foreign to my habits, and hateful to my principles. Far better would the word "protection" have suited me: but open protection against the authority of a parent, I cannot, in decency, ex-

tend to her. Of any personal indignation which this step may draw down upon myself, I take no heed: although many might be forward to warn me, that HIS vengeance hath been ever found formidable, and that he is accustomed to exact it to the uttermost. Thou hast thought fit, girl, to fly from thy natural protector and governor, that thou mayest avoid an act of tyranny, an odious and compulsive marriage, which, according to your representations, would have embittered your whole existence; but not—mark me—to follow your own wilful and vain humours here; not to set an example of reckless levity to this well-ordered household; nor, above all, to demean thyself, even in the assumed character of a menial servant, by a disgraceful and degrading notice of any vile peasant in this neighbourhood."

Her last words were uttered in a high key—a tone, which having been gradually increasing in sharpness, rose at last to a most unharmonious scream. They were accompanied also by a piercing look, intend-

ed, and fully expected, to overwhelm the hearer with a sense of united shame, grief, and consternation. Indeed, so highly did the old lady estimate the force of her own oratory, that she almost thought she had said too much, and was in doubt whether she should not add a softening phrase—when, to her astonishment and rage, she perceived the cheek of Jeannette to be dimpling with a smile.

"My valued and dearest god-mother," replied the latter, "hath been so good, at last, as to do that, which, for many days, I have been expecting; and which, if it had not happened, would have sadly disappointed me: that is to say, she hath been persuaded to find fault with me. My situation in this place—thank heaven and you, madam—is neither comprehended, nor suspected by any of your people: and had I not perceived some effects of their jealousy, the sign would have been ominous—perhaps, of all our ruin; certainly, of impending trouble and disaster to myself."

"These easy airs, this assumed gaiety, will not do, child," said the Lady of Altdorf and Largentières. "I am disposed to befriend thee; but, while under my safeguard, remember, that the parental authority is only exchanged for mine; which, while thou remainest here, must be equally absolute."

"And shall, in every thing, be submitted to," cried Jeannette, "without a murmur, or so much as a look graver than ordinary."

"Let it be so, girl, in more than promises. And first, I will have thee——sorrowful truly it is, and shameful, that I should be compelled to mention such a subject——I will have thee, I say, avoid yon lozel of evil repute, as thou wouldst a venomous reptile! and neither speak to, nor look on him more. If I could once suppose that he had a place in thy thoughts—this castle were no longer an abode for thee—than, till I should have delivered thee up (from the strictest confinement) to an angry father."

"Had I not been aided, in the hour of

need, by the person whom you are thus pleased to revile," replied the younger female, "I never might have arrived here, to avail myself of my best friend's kindness."

"The wretch, I tell thee, is a miscreant of the most diabolical order, and hath either dealings with the arch-enemy, or is a base impostor, of almost equal guilt. By holding parley with him, thou dost endanger thy soul!"

"He did me no bodily injury, however," said Jeannette, "when, lost and wandering amid the woods, I met him, at midnight, without any defender at hand, save old Gortier."

"He hath the sordid habits of the lowest and most ignorant hinds!"

"Then, madam, those habits are manifested, by behaviour more modest, language more courtly, and manners more refined, than many an inmate of a baron's castle."

"Adelaide!" said the lady, "I verily am ashamed for thee! Thou dost shock me, and degrade thyself."

"My name you will deign to remember, madam," she replied, with playfulness, and never-failing good humour, "is now Jeannette, and not Adelaide:—but to be serious. If it were possible (which, I am well convinced, it never can be) for the most indulgent, as well as exalted of my friends, to believe that I have demeaned myself in the manner which hath been represented;—— she will do well— —not indeed to abandon me to persecution, and a hateful marriage— but, to drive me from hence, and compel me to seek an asylum elsewhere. As to the poor youth, from whom, in perfect disinterestedness on his part, I have received an essential service; conferred, from a pure motive of kindness, without the slightest knowledge of me, or my fortunes——I will yet reward him, suitably, if heaven shall please to grant me the means. He is no sordid rustic; that, I shall ever affirm— take it as you list. He is no vulgar being, either in his speech, notions, or apprehen-

sion; although the son, unhappily for him, of a man— — —"

"Held in universal abhorrence and execration," cried the Dame D'Altdorf: "one devoted to dark and accursed pursuits: upon whom Holy Church hath long had her eye; and whose expiation for his manifold iniquity, at the stake, many, far older than myself, may, reasonably, hope to witness. The evil fame of that caitiff hath already extended to the most distant provinces of the kingdom; and his means of livelihood, as some say, are supplied by those who ought to know their duty better; but who avail themselves of the miscreant's forbidden science, while they profess to abominate his person."

Here the old lady broke off: she had heard the sound of a distant horn, which, from its feeble note, might have been blown on the further side of the moat—or even as far off as the extremity of the village. She was sure that she had heard the sound, however; it was not an every-day occur-

rence, and she questioned its import. But when a responsive blast issued from her own inner court, with which the whole edifice rang again—there could no longer be any doubt of an arrival at the castle.

Casual guests were, in those days, unfrequent, and not to be admitted without caution and scrutiny. The chateau was, therefore, in commotion, from one end to the other. Soon, the house-steward, or seneschal, presented himself, and made a formal report to his lady. Upon which, the men at arms (for some were then to be met with in every dwelling of distinction—and, in this, no contemptible force,) well accoutred in the proper colours of the house of Altdorf, half clad in steel, and duly provided with lance, bill, or cross-bow—were ordered to their posts: and the warden, preceded by the lady of the mansion, and her protegée Jeannette, repaired to the main tower; from whence, those without the gates became, by degrees, sufficiently distinguishable.

At first, a band of horsemen were alone to be seen: they had halted; had all drawn up together in a ring, and were holding a conference. One or two among them, to judge by the high feathers which were to be descried waving above the heads of the general group, might be persons of rank: but the man who bore the pennon, which would have given some intimation of their leader's degree, trailed it so low over his shoulder, that it was hidden by the crowd, and afforded no information to those upon the turret.

Suddenly, their council seemed to have broken up; and a knight, in white armour, singly approached the barbacan.

At that moment, Jeannette, who had been so little disconcerted, a few minutes ago, at the wrath of the great and grave dame by her side, changed colour; whispered in the lady's ear; and was heard to ask, whether she still meant to prove her friend, and protect her?

"To the death," replied the old lady,

stoutly and instantaneously: "Thou art, indeed, a silly child; but hast placed thy sole reliance on thy god-mother, and shalt not be forsaken. Withdraw, however, for the present, and conceal thyself: till policy faileth us, force must not be resorted to."

Notwithstanding so sage a determination, the Lady of Altdorf seemed to have contemplated an appeal to force as no improbable conclusion of this adventure. And, to be the better prepared for it, she issued a peremptory mandate against the admission of more than a certain portion of the knight's followers. Such precautions were common; and, in hers, the newly-arrived cavalier appeared readily to acquiesce.

During this parley, the great hall had been put into some order, for the ceremony of his reception: at the upper end of which sat the Dame herself; while the domestics, according to their respective ranks, formed a lane, from the steps of the platform, entirely down to the buttery: and the number

of the train agreed upon having entered the mansion, the bridge was again drawn up, and duly guarded. Then, having advanced through the courts, with the proper solemnities, the chief stationed his few attendants without the hall, and was ushered to the post of dignity, through the two rows of assembled menials. When he was near enough to have raised one foot upon the platform, the Lady of Altdorf and Largentières arose, and permitted him to take her half extended hand; which (as he bent a knee to the ground) he touched, gently, with his lips.

"Unless my memory deceiveth me more than it is wont," said she, "I have the gratification of receiving, within my lowly dwelling, a distinguished friend of our race, in Sir Guy de Varogne."

"The same, honoured lady: and, as ever, thy faithful servant." He led her to her seat; and standing rather close behind than abreast of it, leant forwards, and a short and inaudible communication having

taken place between them, she waved her hand for the domestics to retire. The order was obeyed forthwith, though somewhat reluctantly by many of them: and the principal personages being left by themselves, confronted each other, in all befitting state, at the elevated end of that long and lofty apartment.

The less the Dame D'Altdorf felt really at her ease, the more she assumed a firm, and even a haughty deportment: and when Sir Guy, at her bidding, had occupied a seat near her——

"I have to thank the unlooked-for train of circumstances," said she, "whatever it may be, which hath procured me the satisfaction of entertaining, once more in my life, a cavalier of the Sieur de Varogne's renown." She looked at him, while she waited for his answer, much as one fencer eyes another, after recovering from a feint, or unsuccessful thrust.

"That I came hither, principally, with a view of paying my humble duty and at-

tentions at the chateau de Largentières, I am bold to affirm, noble lady; and should be glad to see the man who will gainsay me. But to declare, that I sought the north of France, solely, on that account, might neither suit my frankness, nor my honesty. Unusual occurrences demand unusual exertions: and, in addition to private and family misfortune,——the public affairs of the realm, at this momentous period, have so implicated mine in their consequences, that I am fain to have recourse to measures which, believe me, I would right gladly avoid. Honoured lady, I must arrive at deep discoveries, by means of which, a while ago, I might have shuddered to avail myself; and the nature of which, I scarcely now can frame my lips to mention. But as I have trespassed on the hospitality of the most esteemed friend of our house, I would likewise be indebted to her for such local information, as she, doubtless, can abundantly afford me. In the first place, however, that I may enu-

merate my vexations the more regularly,—I would remind you, madam, of my daughter, at whose baptism you were present, and for whom you deigned to answer, at the font. That only daughter—that graceless child, of the disposal of whom in wedlock, as I had the sole right—so, none but a father could be supposed to——"

They were here, unexpectedly, but most effectually interrupted; to the relief, upon the whole, of the lady; though, from the manner in which Sir Guy introduced the mention of his daughter, she had conceived hopes, that he might possibly be ignorant as to the direction of her flight, notwithstanding that they were both under the same roof at that moment.

The interruption was occasioned by the Knight's own people; one of whom having heard, since they came to Largentières, an article of urgent and most important public news, had rushed, unbidden, despite of all decency and etiquette, into the presence, and amid the private conference of the

Dame with his Lord—in order to communicate it instantly to the latter; while several of the lady's household, followed also tumultuously, pursuing him, in vain, and adding to the disturbance, by the vehemence with which they deprecated this unbecoming intrusion. But what he had to impart, soon occupied the whole of the Sieur De Varogne's attention; and, in no ordinary degree, commanded that of the lady.

The King of England, as a courier just arrived most positively had reported, was at the very gates of Paris: and although some questioned the fact of his having plundered and destroyed the greater part of the suburbs— there could be no doubt whatever that the village of Ruelle, with one of the royal residences, had been burnt to the ground.

Upon this intelligence, so intense became the curiosity of De Varogne, that he appeared—by the air of authority with which he ordered the messenger to be

sent in—to have forgotten, that he was not, exactly, within his own domain: and, notwithstanding all the interest attached to present circumstances, the Lady of Largentières thought so likewise.

She made no objections, however, to his proposal;—and the man being introduced, shewed himself a sturdy partisan of the crown of France, by the declarations, to which he constantly adhered, that, in spite of the apparent aspect of affairs, all was really going well with King Philip; who had surrounded his adversary, and must, eventually, destroy him.

This news, of course, produced a mighty sensation; and every one considered it in his own favourite light.

The Lady of Altdorf and Largentières, who had been wishing, for some time, that the laws of hospitality would have admitted of her turning De Varogne out of her dwelling, now suggested to him, that the King of France was her liege-lord; that she fully

intended to preserve her fidelity by him; and therefore, if Sir Guy de Varogne, as a native of an English province, Guienne, deemed his allegiance due to King Edward —she could not but foresee (while she heartily lamented it,) that the Chateau de Largentières might become, on all accounts, an improper residence for him.

To her surprise, however, De Varogne, though he only hinted, somewhat obscurely, the good affections toward France of his kinsman and chief the Baron of Montcroullier,—expressed, much less reservedly, his own intention, either of absenting himself from the contest altogether, or of offering his service to Philip De Valois.

After such an avowal, no more was to be said.

The lady devoted a suite of apartments within the great southern tower, to the use of her guest; sent one of her chief officers with him, to see that all was in

fit preparation; and betook herself to a chamber at the other extremity of the mansion, where Jeannette had long been waiting for her, in no little distress and trepidation.

CHAPTER VI.

At this period, the war, which the popular and glorious, but vain projects of Edward the Third of England had excited throughout the southern and western parts of France, changed its course to the northward: and even the tranquil and obscure villages, which have lately been the scene of this narrative, began to experience all the interest in public concerns, with which a sense of personal danger alarmed the timid, approaching active events inspired the enterprizing, and a chance of general plunder and confusion encouraged the unprincipled.

The Sieur de Varogne, who had long been wavering as to the line which it became him—that is to say, which it might be his interest—to adopt in the progress of this contest, now found himself called upon to act; and the continually important intel-

ligence, which flowed in every day, and from every quarter, compelled him to act with decision. That Caen had been taken some time, he knew; and that Gisors had been sacked since, and, for the most part, destroyed. I now heard (as was signified in the last chapter), that the Earls of Harcourt and Dreux, Edward's generals, were within a league of Paris; and that the metropolis itself, a place very imperfectly fortified, was only protected by the presence of King Philip, and the confidence created by his brave, conciliating, and judicious demeanour.

Sir Guy of Varogne, therefore, made up his mind to venture upon an experiment in earnest, the inclination to which (though not quite matured into a resolution to try it) had brought him into that part of the kingdom.

This measure, however repulsive to many natures, was universally considered as capable of being effective, and conformable to the daring and impious, though

superstitious, notions of the times. He determined to consult a person whose fame was but too notorious, upon his difficulties and prospects: not without a degree of hope, that the valuable present which he had taken care to bring with him, might propitiate the Wizard Grimmfer, and induce him to exert that influence upon his own future fate, which De Varogne confidently believed him to have the power of doing. Still he dreaded the interview. Sir Guy was far from deficient in the sort of courage indispensable to the age in which he lived; he even made pretensions to a more than usual degree of audacity; and, to say the truth, if he had been judged by his conduct, he might well have passed for the character to which he apparently laid claim—that of a bold desperate man, reckless alike of angel or devil, in the pursuit of his object.

But, however he might constantly talk, or however he might frequently act, the Knight did really labour under the cus-

tomary inconsistencies and infirmities of mankind; and was far from exempt from the slavery which, in those days, superstition universally imposed upon ignorance: nor could he always shake off, merely because it would have been convenient to do so, the terrors inseparable from such a state of thraldom.

The thoughts, therefore, of so close a conference with a Being, the reputation of whose dark alliances, and frightful secrets, had been bruited from the Somme to the Rhine, and from the Rhine to the Garonne, were by no means productive of unmingled delight to Sir Guy. He took measures, however, for procuring all needful information; and he inquired, of the peasants, the way to the old man's sordid habitation; but was always replied to with reluctance and aversion: neither (with exception of such ruffians as he cared not, just then, to employ) could he prevail upon a single individual to accompany him thither, even in broad day.

Thrice, at length, he had approached the spot alone; and as often, after contemplating the scene, with sensations upon which he felt glad that nobody else was present to comment——he invented some excuse to himself for deferring the interview.

But, on the third of these expeditions, as he returned through the wood, deep in thought—he stopped, in the middle of one of its rudest and most questionable tracks, doubtful whether a distant sound, which had just then reached him, were the bell from the tower of Largentières, heard, in a fair wind, all over the country. Before he had decided upon that subject——an extraordinary figure suddenly appeared in the path, and stood directly before him. Sir Guy looked up; felt certain that it was the Wizard; and kept his ground, with dogged resolution—but did not accost him. Old Grimmfer gazed upon him also, in profound silence, for some minutes: during which, the face of the Sieur de Varogne

might have been well worth observation. At their first meeting, Grimmfer assumed a haughty expression, as if, conscious of being hated, he likewise knew that he was dreaded; and expected to see this person shrink, as others did, from his presence, and avoid him in consternation. But, afterwards, on perceiving that the stranger stood his ground——a movement, indicative of discomposure, perhaps even of something like alarm, might have been perceptible in the features of Grimmfer himself; although it was soon succeeded by a smile, which lurked about the corners of his mouth——and a smile, rather of triumph, than of good-will.

Neither party seemed quite satisfied at being thus suddenly brought face to face. Neither appeared inclined to break the silence; and yet, like two animals accidentally confronted, who are mutually afraid of the contest, but whose instinct leads them to attack each other—neither chose to leave the place.

At last, De Varogne, angry and ashamed of his own feelings, thought proper to speak.

" I seek," said he, " the dwelling of one Gaspard Grimmfer: a man more talked of than known; more shunned than followed; more detested, even, than wondered at; and, as I am apt to believe, more feared than either. But I am not given to fear aught upon this earth, about, or beneath it: and thou, I reckon, canst more effectually guide me to his abode, than any of the white-livered hinds to whom I have hitherto applied."

" The man you seek," replied Grimmfer, " is absent from his home; and when he may be spoken with is uncertain. Nought doth he want from any of you: why, then, come ye hither in search of him? But ye vilify, and persecute, as far as ye dare, the person of whom ye yet all stand in need."

" Surely, I address him at this moment," said Sir Guy.

"It may be so: but he hath no leisure for listening to you."

"Old man, thou art on thy way home; and, should I choose to go with thee—— who shall prevent me?"

"Say ye even so! Must we have threats, too, and blustering? Rail on then; swear thy fill; or try what force may do——the winding up of the ruffian's argument! Meanwhile, hark ye, Sir Knight of Guienne——"

De Varogne gave a start; and, recoiling a few paces, looked behind him; and muttered, involuntarily, the commencement of a prayer, at that time supposed to operate as a particular charm against the influence of evil spirits.

Gaspard laughed aloud. "Go to," he cried: "is thy boldness so soon damped? Learn, man, that the fame, whether good or ill, of Gaspard Grimmfer is not undeserved. To him, few breasts are closed; few artifices unknown; from the cunning of the peasant, the low sordid trickster of

an obscure village,—to the treachery and disloyalty of one, even as highly born as from the proud stock of Montcroullier: treachery to his nearest kinsman; disloyalty to his sovereign, Edward of England."

De Varogne's cheek grew livid; his eye assumed a dangerous expression; and his hand crept along his belt, to the hilt of his dagger. He grasped it, but paused; perhaps waiting for more provocation, perhaps requiring more nerve, before he could venture to use it.

"Sir Knight," said Grimmfer, without seeming to have noticed his gestures, "the interview which you demand, I will insure to you. The information for which you pant, I solemnly do promise you. This, however, is not the fitting season. Meantime, recover thyself: repress all angry astonishment at the knowledge which you may now, or hereafter, discover me to be possessed of. Be warned, likewise, not to proceed intemperately, in any event. My counsels, and *secrecy*, may be secured by

discretion, but never by violence; no—not by the last act of outrage: neither must you take offence at the freedom of my language. This evening, from nine by the castle bell, until midnight, will be graced by a fair and brilliant moon. It may aid thee on thy way toward my remote dwelling; the paths leading to which (notwithstanding thy delusive questions) thou art already acquainted with. The moon, I say, will afford you light, while light shall be most needful——and further, when we shall have met together, for concerns of awful import—she will altogether withdraw her beams, and give place to the powers of darkness." So saying, he left the spot abruptly; and Sir Guy, overpowered by various emotions, made no attempt to follow or detain him; but, briefly assenting to the appointment for the night, pursued his former route towards Largentières, but at a slower pace than ever; with a mind full of anxiety, foreboding, and dread, though fortified, by wilful passions, against

swerving, in the least, from his determined course.

Grimmfer, meanwhile, repaired to his own gloomy cavern; where he found the youth, who passed for his son, awaiting his return, pensive and dejected, but not the less resolute.

Eustace, well aware of the old man's fits of wrath, or rather frenzy, on contradiction from those whom he had been used to govern—took a careful survey around him, to ascertain that no deadly weapon was at hand, before he apprized him, in very respectful though decided terms, of his desire—indeed, his intention, to quit that part of the kingdom, perhaps for ever, and to seek his own fortunes in the world. He could not but add, that he was the more earnest to leave Largentières, since, in that vicinity, without any fault of his own, his person had become suspected, and his name tainted. Eustace had made up his mind, not only to say this, but to carry it into effect: at the same time, he delivered him-

self with considerable misgivings and apprehension; not so much of any mischief which might befal him, as lest old Grimmfer should be seriously injured by some new paroxysm of rage. But, to the infinite surprize of the younger, Gaspard answered, if not with suavity, at least with composure; and told him at once, that however the truth might be, as to the relationship in which they had been supposed to stand towards each other; there were certainly circumstances about Eustace's birth which had hitherto been concealed from him, and which might hereafter be disclosed, when the season should be ripe for such a discovery. That, for his own part, however, he would harbour no one, kinsman or otherwise, who refused to be subject to him in all things. And he concluded by demanding, whither the lad meant to go, and what were his views?

The eyes of Eustace sparkled, and his whole countenance brightened. He felt that he was free; he was sanguine

enough to believe that he should make a good use of his freedom; and the knowledge of his own qualifications, in particular, his remarkable personal vigour and activity, —gave him hopes, which, in that age, were not unreasonably founded, of speedily rising into notice. He replied, therefore, that he should not have far to go for employment; as the tide of war, for some time, had been setting in that way, and was now gathering fast around them. His proposal consequently was, to depart that very afternoon, and to join the ranks of Sir Godemar de Faye, who had been posted near the mouth of the Somme, to guard a ford, by which it was clear that the English would endeavour to pass, as soon as the state of the water permitted them. Eustace added, that although he had no armour, he was possessed of a good sword; and should be as fit to take the field, as many whom he had seen setting out for that purpose, clothed very scantily, and

armed only with their instruments of husbandry.

To his gratification, however, and still increasing astonishment, he found that old Gaspard had some urgent advice to give him, for his conduct upon this occasion; a complete suit of armour to supply him with; and such information to impart, as influenced him with respect to the cause which he was to espouse in the approaching decisive conflict. Grimmfer apprized him, in the first place, that he owed no duty to Philip de Valois; that he belonged to a noble house in the south of France; but of a province, at that period, under the dominion of the crown of England; and consequently, having been born King Edward's subject, his services should be tendered where his allegiance was due. This much being premised, he produced the armour from a low and dark recess stretching far beneath the rock; a recess, which Eustace, when a child, had always considered as something dreadful, as the

very penetralia of the cavern—and into which he had ever trembled to pry. The Seer equipped him from head to foot; he pointed, but without any verbal remark, to the surcoat of arms emblazoned upon the breastplate; and also noticing the crest, a bull's head sable, armed or, which, in like manner, adorned the ridge of the helmet, —he took a cold leave of the young man, by waving his hand; and again retreated to the depths of his den.

Eustace, who well knew the country for many a league round, now lowered his beaver, that he might avoid the inhabitants of that immediate neighbourhood; and proceeded, at an effective pace, in quest of the host of the prince to whom his duty was devoted. He expected to have found the English on the left bank of the Somme, and to have experienced some difficulty in joining them; but, by noon, they had made good the passage of the river, routed Sir Godemar de Faye, and, towards night-fall, King Edward had united his whole force

near Cressy in Ponthieu. The young adventurer from Grimmfer's cave arrived there likewise late in the evening; and being totally unknown, while his air, accoutrements, and whole appearance spoke most favourably for him—he was straightway conducted into Edward's presence; received with that monarch's accustomed affability; and, having been questioned solely as to his local information, he had a post assigned him under the Lord Robert Nevil. So circumstanced, we must leave him for the present; to attend the approaching conference between his reputed father and the Sieur De Varogne.

The object of Sir Guy, the same with that of many others, both before and since, was, to be confirmed, by a powerful opinion, in following the line of conduct which he had pre-determined to adopt; and, like the Moabite king of old, he seemed to have imagined, that a man possessed of superhuman knowledge, must also be endowed with the power of directing future events;

and might, consequently, be affected by his own interests in the disposal of them. Now, that Gaspard Grimmfer could command (wherever he had procured it) a degree of knowledge greatly beyond the ordinary race of mortals, Sir Guy needed no further conviction, after the interview of that morning, and the allusions which, to the confusion, dismay, and rage of his auditor, he had made to certain prominent events in the career of the latter.

There had been more moments than one during that conversation, when De Varogne felt a strong inclination to give the necromancer such a retort under the fifth rib, as would ever have secured the silence of one, who clearly showed how formidable a foe he was capable of becoming. And if, from various motives, he then abstained from violence; partly, because his hopes of yet making Grimmfer's art available to himself, predominated; and partly, because even at noontide, and when they were by themselves in the midst

of the wood, he still had his apprehensions of the old man;—it may be conceived how uneasy those apprehensions rendered him, when the shadows began to lengthen; when the sun just lingered above the earth; when the twilight gradually, but rapidly faded; and the cold uncertain light of the rising moon apprized him that the hour was at hand, when he must seek this terrific personage in his own retreat; when he was to meet him, with all his spells and charms prepared; and in a place, where, if Grimmfer was not solitary,—it could only be, because beings worse even than himself, might be but too prompt to join his society.

Sir Guy had hitherto borne himself, under all difficulties, as boldly as the best, and bolder far than the generality; but this was a new species of adventure; and the deeper he engaged therein, the less satisfactory was his contemplation of it. Twice, during his walk to the cave, did something happen, which, at any other

time, he would have disregarded, but which now annoyed him with sensations partaking at once of irritation and fear. First, in a spot where trees intercepted the moon, he heard a heavy sigh so close to his ear, that he stretched forth his arm, in full confidence of touching the person who stood, as he supposed, just at his right hand;—but felt nothing. He stopped; he was all attention; but the sound was not repeated. Afterwards, in the clear moonlight, he felt a shock, as if somebody had pushed by him. He instantly turned round, with an exclamation of a menacing nature. Nothing could be seen, however, beyond the trees and bushes.

But before he had got on much further, a stranger occurrence than ever appalled, perhaps yet more than it enraged him. A voice, he thought, a human voice, pronounced certain words very distinctly; but, had he been disposed to question the fact, all doubt was precluded, by the words being applicable to him, and to HIM ALONE.

Sword in hand, he pursued in the direction whence these sounds seemed to have proceeded; but his efforts were fruitless; and, in great disturbance of mind, he stood still beneath an oak; doubting whether he should keep his appointment for that night at all.

What circumstance re-assured him, or how he fared between the last cause of alarm and the time when he reached old Grimmfer's dwelling—never appears to have been thoroughly known.

Gaspard, on his part, repeatedly left the cavern, as it grew late; and, still keeping near his home, had for some time been employed in watching the face of the sky; but without any signs of impatience; on the contrary, when the moon began to decline, before the arrival of his guest, the seer's features are said to have expressed a malicious gratification. He had just returned within, after making some of these observations, when the outer wall of his habitation was struck so heavily by a

large staff or stone, that he not only heard but felt the shock as he sat.

"Art thou he who is expected?" called Grimmfer, from the window.

"Curse thee heartily," said a voice; "come forward, do, and let me in. I am entrapped—'tis probable; but shall not lie quiet in the toils, I promise thee."

"What aileth the man?" returned Gaspard. "Hast lost thy way in coming hither?"

"No matter;—here I am. Show me the entrance to thine infernal lair. Show it me, I say."

"Move to your left, then; now, round the farther end;—now, between the building and the hill. — — What is he dreaming of? Have his wits forsaken him? Stoop man, stoop; and then straight on with thee."

Sir Guy, although reluctantly, did as he was desired; and at length found himself in a melancholy, dingy place, more like a sepulchre, than the apartment of

any living person; rather spacious, in proportion to its height; but so obscure, from their only light being much concealed—that they could scarce discern each others faces.

"Guy of Varogne, be seated;" said Grimmfer, "and tell me what hath brought thee from thy castle at Guienne?"

"He," replied the cavalier, "who can declare my name, country, and kindred, when, to the best of my remembrance, I have never, until this morning, beheld him—will need no information from me. I am in search, however, of a perverse girl, who, in flying from me, hath rebelled against a father. Neither is that my sole object ——" Here he produced a bag of some dimensions, and handed it to his companion; who examined the contents for a minute or two, bowed his head, and laid it aside.

"I am likewise in search —— —but what booteth it to be particular? Thou knowest what perplexities beset me."

"Not I," said Grimmfer.

"Take heed, old man; thou mayest find me more troublesome, than thou hast reckoned upon. That I suspect foul play, I tell thee openly; and I believe, that thou hast been trying thy devil's tricks upon me already."

"How so, Sir Knight?"

"I met thee in the wood."

"Aye; in the forenoon."

"Not an hour ago I met thee there."

"You saw my face then—and knew me?"

"Be that as it may, thou hast crossed my path, more than twice, this very night."

"No such thing. Do not deceive yourself," said the wizard. Neither of them seemed to have been pleased by the course of their conversation hitherto; and after this, neither spoke for a considerable time. The lamp, imperfectly as it had shone before, now faded almost to nothing; and the moon having also gone down—the

Sieur de Varogne appeared to find his situation rather uncomfortable. He rose from his seat and drew his sword. "I will not be made a tool of," said he; "if thou dost meditate evil;—be quick with it—or thou shalt find me beforehand with thee."

"Compose yourself and hear," replied the wizard; "my thoughts are but employed upon thee and thy concerns. Sir Knight, Sir Knight,—hath not thy noble kinsman suffered sufficiently from thee already?"

De Varogne felt a sudden chill over his whole frame. "I surely confront the prince of darkness himself!" he cried, and turned round toward the door; then summoning resolution afresh—"When we have reached a certain point; to recede is inglorious,—and more perilous than to advance. Miscreant! if thou wilt, thou canst relieve my anxiety. I have paid thee liberally; I have supplied thee with what might raise the lowliest beggar to compe-

tence; and I require, that my doubts should be satisfied. There are three questions, to which I desire a reply; and thou *knowest* the nature of them."

"If I do not," said Grimmfer, I can summon hither those who do."

There was something about that sentence which De Varogne disliked. He made no objections, indeed, to what seemed to have been proposed; but looked cautiously round him, and demanded more light, three or four times;—'till, on approaching his companion, he was shocked to perceive that his eyes were motionless; the features of his face fixed like marble; and that he sat in a sort of trance. A faint and oppressive sensation seized upon Sir Guy; and when he sought the window for relief; he heard the roar of the wind, as if blowing tempestuously, but felt not a breath of air.

While he stood at the window, Grimmfer began to move, and was evidently

struggling to speak. But he spoke unintelligibly; till, at last, Sir Guy pretty distinctly heard him repeat these words— "If thou wouldst learn thy fate—be bold now, and look behind thee."

De Varogne obeyed;—and immediately uttered a piercing shriek. But despair having quickly succeeded to horror, he rushed forward, brandishing his sword - and, without any resistance to his course, touched the opposite wall of the apartment. "Where is it?" he cried; "what hath become of him? where is he gone? Fiend that thou art," turning to Grimmfer; "tell me what—tell me whom I have seen; or I fell thee this instant to the ground."

"Speak to him yourself," said the sorcerer," "for he is still near us; and he shall resolve all thy difficulties."

But the fit of desperation which had hitherto nerved De Varogne, was now giving way fast. Cold sweats started from his brow; to the very extremities of his

fingers—yet his forehead burnt like a furnace, and his limbs tottered under him. "Old man," said he, "thou shalt have thrice the reward which I have just put into thy hands, if thou wilt help me from hence, without another sight— —without again beholding——. Thy superior powers I acknowledge; heed not my late impetuous conduct, and pardon the threats, which— —perdition! there he stands again."

Rouse thee, as befitteth a warrior and a knight;" cried Gaspard; "thou seest but HIM, whose aid thou hast long been seeking. Bear up like a man, and tell me what he resembleth."

"A thin pale boy, if I see aright;" replied Sir Guy; "but his countenance doth sorely distress me."

"Turn from him then," said the wizard, and propose thy questions; but be brief, for his moments are limited."

"The only brother of my father, the present Baron de Montcroullier," said De

Varogne, though without using any form or accent of interrogation, "hath been deeply injured by me."

"Less so," replied a dissonant, shrill, and very singular voice, "than thou didst intend, or art aware of."

Sir Guy shuddered at the tone; turned to the wizard as if he had claimed protection, and then appeared to recollect himself; but made a strong effort before he could proceed.

"The purport of those words," said he, "passeth my comprehension.

"That is possible," observed Grimmfer, "but no others may be obtained."

"Should I not outlive the kinsman, of whom I spake," continued De Vargne, in the same indirect and paltering mode of speech, "much peril both for the present and future, hath been vainly incurred. "Say, therefore,"—(speaking louder, and, as he probably thought, more boldly)—"what will ensure to me the certainty of surviving him?"

"Thine own good sword."

"Aye;—lean thy counsels that way; and shall it surely avail me?"

"Be watchful; be resolute," replied the voice.

"What meaneth"—cried De Varogne, suddenly addressing himself to Grimmfer, "that dismal wailing sound?"

"He is about to depart."

"Not yet;—one moment, I beseech thee—I entreat but for a moment longer. My daughter— —shall I ever regain her?"

"Ere fifty hours have gone by."

"How? when? where?—ah! saw you there?—it lightens. By the archfiend, he is gone; he hath left us. Are we alone, old man?"

"Quite alone," said Grimmfer, nor can he now be recalled."

But they did not long remain together. The Sieur De Varogne, as soon as he was enabled to arrange his ideas at all, remembered the situation of the two armies; the

probability of their coming to blows that very day; and how much, in the event of a decisive battle, remained to be done by him.

The sun arose, as he took his way from the abode of the sorcerer; imparting a degree of relief, and even temporary exhilaration, to a mind, harassed, unresting, conscious of having recently loaded itself with additional guilt, and dissatisfied with the brief and unsatisfactory replies, which he had just extorted from so foul a source.

One event alone had been predicted clearly and expressly; that he should again behold his daughter, and within a short space of time. That, however, was by no means the object nearest to his heart. But, with the selfish ingenuity which enables all men, in some measure, and perhaps bad men more than others, to extend partial knowledge by the force of imagination, and to amplify it into a comfortable certainty of compassing all they

aim at;—he had disposed of futurity according to his own will and pleasure, before he reached the village, where he purposed to refresh himself, and to consider his ground, before he should take such steps, as must make or mar him for ever.

CHAPTER VII.

At this place, Sir Guy De Varogne recruited his spirits by a hearty meal; shook off, pretty completely, all remaining depression with which the horrid transaction of the preceding night had affected him; and could listen to the different reports of the country people, with undivided attention, and the degree of interest belonging to his situation. He found that King Philip, although at that time superior to his enemies by more, considerably, than two to one—still lay at Abbeville waiting for reinforcements.

He next ascertained, as far as was practicable, the movements of the English. Near as they were, however, he could not learn their position with the exactness that he wished; but having discovered pretty satisfactorily, that they were not likely to

intercept him, (an occurrence which, among other inconveniences, might have cost him his head,) he proceeded, though with all due caution, towards the city of Abbeville. Sir Guy had not rode far, in that direction, when he perceived himself to be watched; and was soon followed by several horsemen of a suspicious appearance; who, as he declined to accelerate his pace from fear of betraying himself, quickly approached sufficiently close to hail him and command him to stop. Either the tone, or manner, or terms, in which this injunction was delivered, had the effect (instead of exacting compliance,) of inducing him to set spurs to his horse, and scour onward furiously, at the utmost speed that the beast could exert;—frequently looking behind to see whether his pursuers gained upon him; and grasping his sword, determined to exact serious payment for a life which he fully meant to sell upon the spot, rather than be taken by any of Edward's people.

At full gallop he descended an almost

precipitous ravine, into one of the straggling and sunken thickets, so frequent to be met with, in those times, over all the uncultivated country: and those who followed, being hidden, for a while, by the nature of the ground, he was disposed to flatter himself that he had completely got rid of them. But, on ascending the next rise, which was steeper and more extensive, he could no longer escape the conviction, that the others had made full as good use of their time as himself, and were any thing but likely to abandon the chace. At this anxious moment, his own horse took a restive fit, swerved, and, reeling towards the side of the road, just beneath the perpendicular bank, virtually declined to proceed a step further.

His pursuers, now, redoubling their efforts, pressed forward, shouting:—and he had faced them, with the grim aspect of despair, when they suddenly pulled up, and, after a momentary conference together, retreated; with more show, indeed,

of regularity than they had advanced, but still in urgent and evident haste.

What providential event had occasioned his rescue remained totally unknown to De Varogne, till he had carried the point in controversy between himself and his steed; and had compelled the latter, twisting, foaming, and fretting, to mount the remainder of the hill. Then, to be sure, matters opened upon him intelligibly enough. He found himself in the midst of a body of no less than between three and four thousand savage mercenaries, from the heart of Germany, who had followed their truly martial, though blind Sovereign, with many of his most distinguished Knights, into the north of France, for the purpose, certainly, of aiding Philip de Valois. But these worthies, not being aware of the person, merit, connexions, or designs, of Sir Guy de Varogne, would, it is more than probable, have stripped and pillaged, if not murdered him, without the ceremony of asking questions, the answers to which

they never could have comprehended—had not one of their chiefs been at hand, who was able, fortunately, to hold something like a conversation in the French language. The result of this parley was, the deliverance of Sir Guy from all further peril, on his route, either from the Bohemians, or any other auxiliarics; and his speedy introduction, at Abbeville, to the presence of King Philip.

That prince acknowledged him, in terms of favour and distinction, undoubtedly; but with an air of consideration even overstrained; like that, in which all great men are apt to welcome those who, in their favour, have become traitors to their own party: endeavouring, by exaggerated civilities and condescension, to conceal the ill opinion, which they cannot but retain, of such questionable though useful agents.

He sifted De Varogne to the utmost; got from him all the information which could possibly be extracted; and was shrewd enough to discover it, when Sir Guy, by

way of ingratiating himself, had become freer in his communications respecting what was passing in the English camp, than his knowledge would justify. Of his treatment, however, at King Philip's hands, the renegade Knight had no reason to complain: but, when bowed out of the Sovereign's tent, matters assumed a somewhat different appearance with him. From the French nobles and warriors, many of whom detested him, from a jealous feeling, while others, of a more dignified character, held him in disdain for his crooked conduct—he met with nothing but coldness, taunts, and insolence: and, as for their mercenary allies, who could know nothing of his birth and consequence, they considered him in the light of any other deserter from the enemy's ranks, and disregarded him accordingly.

The habits and principles of Sir Guy de Varogne had procured him many and many unsatisfactory hours in the course of his career; but whether he had ever yet passed

a more comfortless day than this, may with reason be doubted. To recede, however, was impossible: he had chosen his part; and, while he strolled about, unemployed, and almost unnoticed, his only consolation consisted in reflections upon the progress he had already made in maturing his schemes, and the chance which a great battle and victory of the French (by him confidently anticipated) would afford him, of completing the grand object for which he had bartered his soul, as well as sacrificed all his peace of mind and reputation in life.

Meantime, notwithstanding the contempt and neglect of others towards Sir Guy, the French monarch had his present reasons for treating him with attention. About the hour of vespers, therefore, after the return of Charles de Montmorency and the Lord of St. Venant, the generals in whom he most confided, and who had been dispatched, early in the morning, to make a reconnoissance in the direction of Crecy—

Philip bade his barons and principal officers to supper, and was careful not to omit De Varogne, whom he placed near his own person. In all ages, and under all circumstances (as a variety of philosophers, and others, have often asserted), human nature has been, substantially, the same: it cannot, therefore, be wondered at, if the distinguished notice of their Prince, backed by the exhilarating circumstances of a sumptuous repast and lively circulation of the bowl, should pretty effectually have relaxed, in the course of the night, that reserve towards their new companion in arms, which had hitherto chilled the breasts of the French courtiers. First, they deemed it fitting, in courtesy, to appear as if they had listened to him when he spoke; then, some few, having listened in reality, vouchsafed to reply to him: and when, relieved and put in heart by this encouragement, Sir Guy exerted himself, and took his full share in the general discourse, his success was, or seemed to be such, as well

recompensed him for the former mortifications of the day; so that all his spirits and presumption returning, under the influence of wine, he triumphed, in secret thought, at the passing recollection of the perseverance, art, and audacity, with which he had pursued his own ends; and revelled in the anticipation of success, and ultimate security.

Perhaps the last injunction given to them by their sovereign, before he dismissed his honoured guests, might have a view to the reception which he meant to procure for Sir Guy de Varogne, and some others similarly circumstanced, from the leading people about him. Philip rose, with a brimming goblet of embossed gold in his hand, and, after a brief preface, cheerfully and judiciously expressed, in allusion to the necessity of union and mutual confidence, at this most important juncture——"Be ye friendly," said the King, drinking off his wine, "without misgivings;—Be ye emulous, without spleen and ostentation."

He then continued standing, while the assembly retired; and had his passing observation for many of them——always of a light nature, sometimes an absolutely ludicrous one, and accompanied, on both sides, with much bantering and laughter.

Sir Guy repaired, well pleased, to the lodging which had been assigned him; threw himself on his bed without even the form of any religious duty; and lay awake, meditating upon the crisis which his affairs had reached: till his mind underwent the change which solitude and darkness, with inability to sleep, while all others lie sleeping around us, are apt to produce. His confidence lessened; his heart began to fail him; images of ill omen crossed his fancy; he remembered the horrible employment to which he had devoted the last night—and twice thought he saw a figure like Grimmfer the Sorcerer standing at a small distance from his couch. Neither, by any effort of the mind, could he shake off that hideous impression, till exhausted nature

gave way at once. Almost instantaneously he sunk into sleep, which he had so long courted in vain; and was aroused, nearly an hour before sun-rise, by the first blast of a trumpet, from the quarter of the auxiliaries under Anthony Doria.

By the dawn of day, King Philip had left Abbeville; and De Varogne, who followed in his immediate train, heard, with an interest that could be surpassed by none in their army, the varying accounts which, from minute to minute, were brought in respecting the movements and position of the English.

Among the peasantry, scarcely two individuals agreed in their report: but when young Arnaud Dubaisson came up, who was an Esquire in the service of the Earl of Aumale, and had been watching the enemy for the last ten hours, from the midst of a swamp covered with willows—the King, and those about him, at length obtained some information which might be depended upon.

The English force, it was computed, could not exceed nine thousand men at the utmost: they had taken their ground in front of an enclosure, a sort of park, flanked by a wood, and surrounded with palisades, and other works hastily thrown up; in which enclosure were deposited all their carts and baggage.

According to this young man's account, they took up their station over night, immediately after supper; and had remained there, seated calmly upon the ground, with their bows and helmets before them, ever since: so that, having rested for many hours, in great measure disarmed, they were likely to be fresh and vigorous when their enemy should appear. Dubaisson further related, that, just as he was about to leave his hiding-place, he saw, very distinctly, King Edward riding through the ranks on a small horse, with a white staff or wand in his hand. The king was received (he said) with loud and universal shouts; and several of his principal officers

accompanied him; of whom he (Arnaud Dubuisson) believed the Prince of Wales to have been one. He was not positive, however, of that circumstance; and indeed could only swear—besides the monarch's own person—to that of Sir Godfrey de Harcourt.

At this juncture, a chief of note under the King of Bohemia, a noble in rank, and a knight of renown and valour unquestionable, approached King Philip; and, in terms the most decided, expressed his opinion, that the attack should be delayed, till their entire force were well in line, and had refreshed themselves, after a march necessarily tumultuous, and impeded by every variety of obstacle.

The French sovereign listened to this advice with civility and attention; but, though he seemed to be more than half inclined to adopt it, his ill star prevailed. The commanders of many of his columns were not at hand: no orders to the effect

recommended were issued out; and the march proceeded.

As they approached the English, the country people, who thronged every road and lane with numbers continually on the increase, began to make such a deafening noise, hallooing, vociferating, and shrieking (the women especially),—that a large body of horse, who were following close in the rear of the first column of infantry, imagined the engagement to have commenced. They pressed hard, therefore, upon the foot, and trampling down many of them, urged the rest impetuously forward: and thus the whole came up, in view of the King of England's position, fatigued, irritated, or dismayed, and in lamentable confusion.

Nor was the disorder lessened by the conduct of Philip de Valois; who had no sooner descried the English vanguard, commanded, as he supposed, by his rival in person—(although, in truth, it was only Prince Edward's division)—than he gave a

loose to his rash vehemence, both by voice and gesture.—"Forward with the cross-bow men!" he cried aloud: "Forward, I say, with those Genoese! and upon them, in the name of Heaven, our Lady, and St. Denis!"

The Genoese, however, full fifteen thousand in number, were not so prompt to accomplish his wishes. Clogged with mire, and jaded with their march, they stood hesitating; a murmur was heard among their ranks; and some of their officers had begun to remonstrate——when the Count of Alençon made his appearance, foaming with vexation and fury: he abused them in the most outrageous terms, and forced them forwards under all disadvantages.

The enemy's division, meanwhile, under that everlasting favourite of England, the younger Edward, rose from the ground with the most perfect composure, fell regularly into their ranks, and began the conflict.

At this period, Sir Guy of Varogne, who

had his own fortunes at stake, and his private wishes to effectuate, quite unconnected with the quarrel between the rival monarchs——left King Philip's person, and pressed on toward the front of the battle, with all the resolution and activity which the crisis required. Repeatedly he descried, in the midst of the opposing host, the banner of the chief of his house, the Baron de Montcroullier; and thrice he saw, or thought he saw, their well-known crest upon the helmet of that warrior himself. Fired by the sight; remembering the prediction at the Wizard's cave—that all should depend upon his own sword; eager to seize this only probable opportunity of crushing the kinsman who stood in his way; and fully prepared to hazard his life for the completion of his deep designs——the disappointment of De Varogne may be imagined, when the repulse of Philip's light troops not only threw him back from his object, but began to look ominous as to the event of the day altogether.

The Genoese archers in the service of France, forced forward, contrary to their inclinations, by the Count of Alençon, with abusive threats, which had no tendency to soften ill-humour, or remove irresolution—did, however, after a fashion of their own, advance upon the English. They had been ordered to shout as they came on—and they certainly did so; but by no means with any universal or cheering effect: and, after three hootings, rather than shouts of encouragement, and an irregular discharge of arrows—they wavered, broke, and fell back, in disorder. King Philip, indignant at this failure, lost all prudence and temper; and, by ordering his own horse to fall upon his own allies, completed the rout in this quarter.

De Varogue, under these untoward circumstances, was wanting in no point of firmness; nor did he forget his peculiar purposes for an instant. He rallied a few of the bowmen, and made a stand, on a hillock surrounded by marshy ground,

where the French cavalry, of whom he had more apprehension than of the enemy, could not readily approach them. But, being attacked in this situation, and his men being again thrown into disorder, and into disorder which, now, proved irreparable—Sir Guy was hurried down the hill by the stream of the run-aways, and, having lost his footing, fell in the morass; where he lay, with two dead bodies stretched across him, until his own party had not only got far on the other side of the hill, but the first line of the victors likewise. He owed his safety, apparently, to the dead who had fallen upon him; from whom he lay, undistinguished, watching for an opportunity to escape—when Fortune, most unexpectedly and opportunely, seemed to have thrown the prize in his way, for which he had deserted his liege lord, and incurred all this reproach and peril.

A cavalier, completely armed, with his vizor drawn down and closed, wearing the

badge of the house of Montcroullier, and about the height of the baron, his uncle, urged a horse through the marsh, which hardly appeared to be of sufficient strength for his rider's weight, and immediately approached the spot where De Varogne lay concealed.

This man was the only person, after the first conflict there, who had attempted to pass in that direction; and he did so, probably, only in consequence of his ignorance as to the nature of the ground, and his impetuosity in following up the advantages already obtained by the English. However that might be, Sir Guy marked him; raised himself upon one knee; grasped his sword strenuously; set his teeth fast, with the look of one who has staked all his hopes upon a single desperate effort; and struck at him, as he forced his panting and struggling horse through the quagmire.

He could not, however (as he was situated), reach higher than the man's thigh;

nor did he inflict an effective blow even upon that, though he narrowly missed it; but, plunging his sword into the bowels of the horse, he gave him a mortal hurt, and the cavalier had a moment only to throw himself off, before the poor beast came down upon his forehead, and from thence rolled over on his side—never more to rise.

De Varogne, regaining his feet about the same time as his opponent, acted with a vigour suitable to the degree of jeopardy in which he had involved himself. He rightly considered that no time was to be lost; and, rushing on furiously, dealt the other such a blow on the neck, that his armour crashed under the weapon——and he flattered himself that little remained to be achieved——when his own career was interrupted by a cross cut, which divided the upper part of the vizor from his helmet; made it swing down, all on one side, hanging, as it were, by a thread; and discovered the whole of his countenance: while a second compliment, of the same

rough description, gashed him dreadfully over the right temple.

They now sprang forward at the same moment;—closed;—and both came down together, the stranger undermost. Sir Guy, who had felt the strength of his enemy, knew, full well, that his own present advantage was but accidental; and, before he could avail himself of it, in order to which he was shortening his sword, and taking a deadly aim at the man below him——he received such a stroke, full in the face, from the mailed and gauntletted fist of the other, that the light grew dim before his eyes; his head swam; and his arm was mastered, before the meditated thrust could take effect. In an instant De Varogne was hurled from his position of superiority; and the last efforts that he remembered to have made, before he totally lost his senses, were fruitless struggles, beneath an irresistible gripe, to keep his face above the water of the morass.

He recovered his sight, and in some

measure his consciousness, before he could, properly, be said to have come to himself. One fit succeeded to another; and, in the intervals, he had an idea of certain objects near him, to avoid whom, he would have welcomed insensibility, or perhaps death itself.

Even during his trance, he shrunk from the people who passed, to and fro, about him, whose armour, or whose countenances, he appeared, by his movements, to recognize——as we sometimes shrink, in our sleep, from the approaches of a feverish dream, which we either remember, or fancy we remember——by which we have an impression of having been visited before—and which we endeavour, even by forcible effort, to dispel.

But nothing could now have availed to aid De Varogne. He did regain his understanding; and with it, the certainty that he was surrounded by fearful realities, in the persons of the Baron De Montcroullier, and others of his kin.

In truth the army of Philip De Valois, broken and dismayed, had abandoned the field on every side; and the renegado knight lay stretched out, under a line of stunted willows which overhung a broad and deep dike; disarmed, grievously wounded, and in the power of those whom he had most injured.

"Nephew of Varogne," said their chief, "your senses appear to be returning; and by your looks I perceive, that you must be conscious where you are, and into whose hands you have fallen. Offer me no reply, man. Above every thing, attempt to palliate no part of thy conduct. Your character, Guy,—long before this day—hath been less unknown to me, than you probably supposed; and to meet you here, in arms against your king, without a grievance to complain of, and in contempt of oaths, duty, honour, and gratitude,—may occasion me some pain indeed, for the disgrace upon our house—but no surprise whatever.

"Torment me not, I adjure thee;" replied De Varogne; "as thou, in thy time, wilt stand in need of mercy. I have scarce strength to speak. For one moment's respite and quiet, I would even supplicate thee." Then, after lying for some time silent, "Lord of Montcroullier," he resumed, "'tis thy intention, I see, to surrender me to Edward; but, if I might choose, I would receive my death from thine award; to be executed by our own people. Is it disgrace to our name that you dread? That might have been avoided. Where, I would ask, was all this zeal for the honour of our house, when you had me down a while ago in the field of battle, and might have despatched me then—but thought it fitting to reserve me for the public fate of a traitor?"

"Unhappy man," said Montcroullier, "thou ravest. I have never personally encountered thee; I never was confronted with thee." Those words, as soon as the

state of the wounded knight admitted of it, brought on some further explanation; but which only served to astonish and confound him, without being a whit more satisfactory to any other person present. At last, a very young man came forwards, accoutred in all points like the Lord of Montcroullier, of nearly the same stature, and wearing the badge and crest of that family. He had been standing amongst them, from the time when De Varogne was found, as every body thought, expiring:—and on the removal of his helmet,—there were few who did not feel an immediate impression, that the young stranger bore, in countenance, a striking resemblance to their chief. Of himself the former spoke but briefly; and merely to assert that he was the person who had fought with Sir Guy De Varogne—and had left him, believing that he could not survive.

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The Lord of Montcroullier addressed the warrior courteously. To be sure, he did

not repress a passing allusion to the circumstance of his having assumed their cognizance, without any apparent right to do so; but his remarks were expressed mildly and civilly, and accompanied with an intimation, that no one had a right to complain of his ranks being joined by a knight of such gracious demeanour and unquestionable valour. To which compliments, the other only replied, that he could neither boast the honour of knighthood, nor (as far as he knew) that of any alliance to the family of Montcroullier: indeed, he would not venture to affirm, that he was of gentle blood at all. Still, however, he thought proper to continue in their company, with the encouragement of Montcroullier, who seemed to have taken a prodigious fancy to him.

At this time, the Baron received directions from his sovereign to push on and possess himself of sundry villages, which were particularly specified. Gladly, therefore, availing himself of his new follower's

knowledge of the country, he issued orders that his people should advance; and found that his first act, in performance of his present duty, must be, to summon the Chateau de Largentières, the residence of his venerated, hereditary friend, and one of the most important posts near the scene of the late conflict. They proceeded for the chateau accordingly, bearing De Varogne in a litter, in the midst of them.

CHAPTER VIII.

When this formidable force took up their ground before the castle of Largentières, they soon manifested, by their movements, and the different positions which they occupied around it, that they had come there in hostility, and meditated a serious attack. The lady, therefore, excessively discomposed at the occurrence, which she, nevertheless, pretended to hold in utter disregard —assembled her principal domestics in the great hall: and taking, herself, the high seat or throne, at the upper end of it,—she sat staring at them, and they at her; 'till, in the fretfulness of mingled fear and anger, she began to abuse them for not offering her any advice. Upon this, two lusty fellows in their hacquetons only, stepped from among the crowd; men of no rank in the household; and, in peaceable times, of as little consequence; though

they were always attended to in the hour of danger, being exceedingly apt to suggest measures, which their lady afterwards honoured by adopting and proposing as her own. On this occasion, they each made speeches, and probably very good ones—but which were the less effective, for being delivered very loudly, very rapidly, and both together.

However, when the terms of the summons to deliver up the castle were made known to her, and when she discovered that they had issued in the name of the Lord of Montcroullier——nothing could exceed the look of indignation, grandeur, haughtiness, intrepidity, and invincibility, which the Dame D'Altdorf thought it becoming to assume. She talked of her faithful adherence to the French monarch, of her own honour, and that of her ancestors, of an undaunted spirit under the feeble frame of a woman, and of burying herself beneath the ruins of the chateau;—and all, within a few minutes of her giving up the place quietly,

lest somebody else should have been sent from the English camp to reduce it, who might not—like the Baron De Montcroullier, be a sincere, steady, and considerate friend of her own.

The Baron was admitted, therefore, accompanied by a force sufficient to secure the post; and was received by the lady with heroism, to all appearance unbroken, though obliged to bend to circumstances.

They had now remained three days within her walls, and the whole history of De Varogne's conduct, defeat, and capture, had been explained to the Dame, who was allowed to attend him herself; she being the less averse to that duty, from her preference for the cause of King Philip. And under her care, nostrums, and embrocations, the wounds of Sir Guy, never so alarming as had first been supposed, began to heal apace.

Meanwhile, Montcroullier, who felt, besides great curiosity, an interest deeper than he could at all explain in the young

stranger,—had introduced him, amongst his own people, into the castle; and taken every opportunity of talking with him, and of endeavouring to comprehend his history and character. But since their arrival within the towers of Largentières, the young man had, himself, become more distant, apparently uneasy, and unaccountably grave. The Baron, however, still continued to be pleased with him. The peculiarity, even the darkness attached to such accounts of himself as he vouchsafed to give—raised the wonder of his auditor, who saw clearly, that his story, though meagre, melancholy, and unsatisfactory, was a strictly honourable one. He had often heard of the person—(there were few indeed who had not)—whom he called his father; and the manner—when they had discovered who he was—in which the inhabitants of the chateau avoided with horror the society of this brave and unoffending individual, excited the Baron's com-

miseration, and increased his desire to serve him.

Neither, to speak the exact truth, was this youthful warrior absolutely neglected by every body else within the mansion.

Jeannette, the protegée and favourite of the old lady, and the damsel who had eloped from her father, Sir Guy De Varogne —on seeing the latter brought in wounded, and groaning from the bitterest vexation of mind, as well as anguish of body,—had rushed forward to tend and make herself known to him, with a solicitude, exceeding that, if possible, which before had induced her to fly from his power. Sir Guy, however, on his part, evinced less gratification at the restoration of his daughter, than surprise at finding her there, and indignation, as far as he ventured to express it, at the Dame D'Altdorf, for having concealed her from him. After the first commotion caused by these events, as soon as the damsel had time to look about her, and to discover whom her kinsman, the Lord of

Montcroullier, had brought in his suite to the castle; she found the same person, whose courtesy on the night of her arrival in those parts she had never forgotten, whose comfortless condition she sincerely pitied, and whose address, manners, and conversation, had long been subjects of deep attention and interest to her. Indeed, to be candid, they had tended, mainly, to relieve her mind from the otherwise intolerable ennui, which, their very respectable mode of passing their time at the Chateau de Largentières, might have produced. Undeterred by the idle tales of the village, she had frequently met and spoken to this young man beyond the walls of the castle; not indeed, with the least idea of encouraging any such notions, as it would have been presumption and madness for him to have admitted even into his inmost thoughts;—but because she saw his good qualities; really wished to befriend him, hoped to have the opportunity of doing so, and perhaps might not be unconscious

of his superiority, both in person and understanding, to all with whom she was in the habit of associating, whether within the chateau or without. Now, therefore, since Eustace had become an inmate of the place, their intercourse was promptly renewed, as promptly observed upon by the gossips around them, and productive of such horror to the Lady of Altdorf, that she bluntly informed De Varogne, then out of danger from his wounds, and only suffering from apprehension of his destined fate—of all that had been told her, and had so mortally shocked and offended her upon this occasion. The result of her communication was, that one morning Sir Guy summoned his daughter (whom they now, no longer, called by her assumed name, Jeannette—but her real one, Adelaide) into his chamber, received her with stern aspect, and was about to have commenced his rebuke—when the Baron De Montcroullier came in abruptly upon their conference, accompanied by Eustace and several others. Nor would

it be pleasant to have shared the feelings of Sir Guy De Varogne, when he was apprized, that one Grimmfer, a man of evil reputation, had inquired for him; that he was then within the castle, and had demanded to be admitted to the presence of him and his uncle in that very apartment. In fact, however, this terrific person, though he certainly spoke of De Varogne in the manner related, had been brought thither at the Baron's command, and by means little short of actual violence.

For Montcroullier, being persuaded, from the young man's own account of himself, that he could not be the son of the strange individual who had hitherto maintained him—felt an irresistible inclination to ascertain his true history; which Grimmfer, and Grimmfer alone, could elucidate. Sir Guy would fain have declined this interview; and had not made up his mind, whether he should admit that he had any previous knowledge of Grimmfer, or should treat him as one whom he had never, 'till then,

set eyes on;—when the wizard, tardy and reluctant in his gait, and averting his face, like some bird of night suddenly forced from his retreat, into the full glare of the sun—was introduced to the chamber. Great was the sensation throughout the castle, when its inhabitants learnt that so awful a being had actually entered it. And, as he ascended the principal stair-case,—the females, from the Lady of Altdorf herself, down to the lowest menial, hurried away to a distant part of the mansion, fearful of even catching a glimpse of his figure as he passed along.

The dark mantle which concealed the tall and gaunt, though still muscular person of this formidable visitor, was the same in which he constantly sat at home, absorbed in his perilous and unlawful studies; insensible, as the country people affirmed, to the cravings of appetite; and totally regardless of the lapse of time. And the appearance of his vesture, rusty from age, soiled, tattered, and shapeless, contrasted strangely

with the polished armour, embroidered doublets, and richness of ornament, displayed by the Baron, by De Varogne, and several of the dependants on the House of Montcroullier, who stood about them. "Gaspard Grimmfer," said the Lord of Montcroullier, "thy fame hath spread but too widely; and my duty, it may be, would compel me to secure and deliver thee up to be proceeded against by holy Church.— But as soldiers will sometimes wink at that which priests might not away with—my forbearance may yet be purchased by honest dealing and sincerity on thy part. "Grimmfer, knowest thou this youth?" pointing to Eustace.

"I know ye all," replied the wizard in a deep hollow voice, the tones of which startled, for a moment, the roughest warrior in presence.

He then, without more ado, turned suddenly upon Sir Guy De Varogne, and thus addressed him. "Thou hast regained thy daughter methinks. What was an-

nounced to thee, yon night, thou seest might be trusted to."

"I cry you mercy, fair coz." said the Baron, "'tis even as I had foreseen. You have found a friend then, in this respected personage?"

"I my good Lord? what, I? I am both astonished and confounded. Doubtless I have been in these parts lately, on a grievous occasion. Alas!—I sought my only child. And this man—it is possible ——— —"

"Ye sacred powers!" exclaimed the Lord Montcroullier, looking aghast at Grimmfer, "what aileth thee, wretch?—Hark ye, miscreant. If thou dost thus assume the look of a demon, for foul purposes of guile or intimidation—they shall smite thee forthwith; despite of him to whom thy soul is bartered." Just before he spoke, the countenance of the sorcerer seemed, to all present, to have been wonderfully altered; and its appearance became so malignant and unutterably hi-

deous, as to appal the stoutest hearts in company.

Adelaide De Varogne uttered a piercing cry and covered her face; while her father, on the other hand, appeared to have had his memory refreshed by the circumstance; for he hastily cried out—"'Tis true; I well remember now; on the night but one before the battle, I saw thee at thy dwelling in the wood."

Here his kinsman, the Baron, looked at him and shook his head.

Grimmfer, meanwhile, having resumed his usual expression of countenance, advanced further into the chamber, and stood in the middle of them calm and unmoved. "William of Montcroullier," said he, "thou hadst once a son."

The Baron stared as if his eye-balls were bursting from their sockets. In the next moment he trembled exceedingly, and his colour totally forsook him. He pointed to the young man, Eustace,—and, in a voice scarcely intelligible, warned Grimm-

fer, for his life, not to deceive him. "Behold that son;" said the wizard coolly; then addressing himself to another quarter, —"Guy of Varogne," he added, "thou hadst once, and for a brief time, an assistant in thy praiseworthy designs; one, who was admirably fitted to realize what thou hadst planned;—and the name of such assistant———" there he paused.

Sir Guy, no longer able to affect tranquillity, approached quite closely; and gazing stedfastly in his face—"Thibaud L'Aunony," said he, with a groan that came from his inmost heart.

"Even so," replied Grimmfer. "Now turn thee, and look upon that young man on whose neck his father leaneth. Hath he not, Knight of Varogne, beat thee down in mortal combat, baffled, and vanquished thee? Aye! and would it not have been thine adequate meed, if he had slain thee outright? His death, as well thou knowest, was decreed in infancy, and decreed by thee. Lost to his parent,—his death was

reported, believed by all—and believed by thee. Stern hath been his nurture, flinty the cradle in which he was rocked. More perilous, by far, would have been his maturity, but that my power was limited. Behold him! a sufferer from the blasted name of one, in whose pursuits he bore no part, and with whose scorn, hatred, and defiance of mankind, he had no kindred feeling. An outcast from his fellow-creatures on another's account,—while he,—poor spiritless innocent! hath been ever as far from sharing in my secrets, as he will be hereafter from partaking in my doom."

After the long and universal silence which followed these words—"I have been a sojourner," said the Lord Montcroullier, "in countries the most lawless and ferocious; have been led, in the train of war, among Scythians, Paynims, and those by whom even the name of the Deity was unacknowledged; and so much have I beheld of the wickedness of mankind in general,

and of the most unprincipled individuals amongst them—that, I did fully believe, no further instance of their vileness would, at this time of day, have been capable of astonishing me. Cousin of Varogne, thou art a very bad man;—I have long known that; but, by my holydame, until this hour, I could not (with all my experience) have imagined how bad."

"Then wreak thy vengeance, without further preaching," exclaimed De Varogne; "thou hast power now, fully equal to thy will." A dialogue ensued here, principally between the parties most interested in the late discoveries; but which attracted, more or less, the attention of all who were present, and drew into considerable length.

About this time, two young women in the service of the Lady of Altdorf, became so impatient to learn a little of what was going forward, that their eagerness, in some measure, got the better of their fears; and they agreed to venture as far as a certain private entrance to the chamber where this

conference was holden, by means of some small circular stone stairs, within one of the narrowest turrets of the edifice.

"What on earth can ail the girl?" said the last of these to the foremost; "either go fairly on, or give way, and let me go first."

"Hush! Babette," whispered the one furthest advanced; "I could almost swear, I heard the door open—the small door on this side the room."

"No such thing," said Babette.

"Then, pr'ythee, do get forward thyself;" rejoined the other, making way for her to pass.

In an instant afterwards there was another halt. "Why dost stop now?" cried the hindermost."

"I was thinking," replied the girl who had been the most adventurous, "that we had, in sooth, better go back; for somebody is coming out now, sure enough. Ah! mercy—mercy!" With a faint cry, she sunk down upon the steps, covering her

eyes with both her extended hands. Her companion, in pitiable alarm, rushed by her; passed another person at the same time; and running down the stairs, at the risk of her neck, or leaping at once to the bottom, scampered off with the speed of a fawn. While no less dreadful a personage than Grimmfer himself, who had quitted the company, unopposed by any body—descended quite at his leisure; and availing himself of a postern door, at the foot of the turret, passed into an open court of the chateau; from whence, equally unobstructed, indeed universally avoided, he easily regained the woods, and his own den in the heart of them.

It will now be expedient to reduce within a moderate compass, a very essential part of the story, which in the original work occupied three chapters, of twenty-six or thirty pages each.

Sir Guy of Varogne met, in the first instance, with more favourable treatment than he had merited or expected. Instead

of giving him up to King Edward to be beheaded, or imprisoned for life in an English fortress,—the Lord of Montcroullier, exerting the power which, in these turbulent times, the great Barons generally possessed, almost beyond the control of their sovereign, found means to secure to himself the disposal of his prisoner; and was content to enjoin upon him the slight penance of a pilgrimage, with suitable offerings, to one of the most celebrated shrines in Italy; after which, it was tacitly understood, that Sir Guy would be restored to a great part of his former possessions.

But far, indeed, were these terms from being granted to him for his own sake.

The Baron Montcroullier, raised above common worldly feelings, by the indescribable bliss of having recovered a son, the early loss of whom had been the wreck of every hope on this earth, and a cause of misery which time might have mellowed, but could never extinguish,—experienced

additional delights, from hour to hour, by the discovery of new qualities in that child of the truest value.

The Father and son were not only admirable in the discharge of their relative duties, but became the most confidential of friends; insomuch, that when Eustace, with a manly warmth, and in the sincerity of his heart, acquainted the Baron with his affection for Adelaide De Varogne—not even the circumstance of her being the daughter of the person, whom, above all mankind, he had most reason to distrust and abominate, could indispose Montcroullier to the gratification of his son's wishes. Nor did the damsel herself, to say the truth, interpose any insuperable obstacles, either from coldness or prudery, to this arrangement. Something, indeed, she threw out, about their consanguinity, which many thought was only started, that she might hear how the difficulty could be got rid of. If so, the Baron soon relieved her, by the assured and undoubting tone in which he spoke of

his interest at the court of Rome, and the certainty of procuring a dispensation. As for her own father, De Varogne, he was informed of all that had been concluded upon, rather as a person about to receive a most undeserved boon, than one, whose consent was at all considered to be necessary.

For Sir Guy, it was sufficient, that his acts of penance were explained to him, and the period pointed out, when he might be permitted to re-visit his native country and reside amongst his kindred—(as the Baron hoped)—an altered and amended character. But he did not live to commence his pilgrimage; and the mode of his death was so mysterious and remarkable, that, while the unvarying terms of the tradition compel us to mention it—at the same time, it must be allowed, that no suggestion or even invention of natural causes, seems capable of affording the explanation which might be desired.

Nothing remains but to give the story

as it was ever related by the Montcroullier family; though, unfortunately, it only furnishes another of those marvellous, and almost incredible legends, common to that age, some of which have reluctantly been introduced into this narrative already.

CHAPTER IX.

Every thing had now been settled for some weeks at the Chateau De Largentières; to the gratification of the Baron Montcroullier, to the yet higher gratification of the young couple, and to the increasing comfort of the Lady of the Castle, who saw, at length, a chance of being delivered from the courteous guests and excellent friends then holding her mansion—with a mild sway, perhaps, but in fact, by right of conquest; and who maintained their followers at her cost and charges.

Even Sir Guy De Varogne professed himself satisfied; and prepared, with a very tolerable grace, to set out on his expedition to Loretto, shortly after the departure of his daughter, with the Baron, for their own province. But when once left to himself, there was nothing either in his mind or prospects calculated to sustain

him, against a full sense of the disgrace, irretrievable failure, and mortifications, which he had recently undergone. With disgust amounting to visible rudeness, he broke away from the society of the stately old dame, who was to remain his hostess, till the time of his leaving France; secluded himself, in an ill-furnished, gloomy, remote apartment of the chateau; and brooded over his many vexations, without an effort to dispel the black cloud which hung over him, the stings of envy and malice which continually goaded him. That his own child should be about to espouse the heir to those vast possessions, which he had coveted and grasped at by such crooked devices—afforded but scanty consolation to De Varogne, for his own personal ignominy, disappointments, and comparative insignificance, for the remainder of his days.

Pondering upon these grievances, he left his room, strolled into the open air, and pacing backwards and forwards, tra-

versed one of the courts of the castle; but on seeing a party of boors near at hand, engaged in some idle sport with the lady's lower domestics—he hastily crossed the drawbridge, and buried himself in the wood. There he met—as some aver, by previous concert; though, that it was by accident seems much more likely—there, however, he is said to have fallen in with his old acquaintance Grimmfer, better known, at the period when they acted together, by the name of Thibaud L'Aunony. A long conversation ensued upon this meeting; but on the whole, their conference would appear not to have been amicable. Sir Guy was in no humour for the cold diabolical taunts of one, who, in all their transactions, had made a miserable tool of him; and who had received from him, many a year ago, a reward far more costly than he could spare—more indeed than he could contrive without great difficulty to raise—for a service of iniquity, which had never been truly performed. On the contrary, the

wizard, (though, according to their compact, he did certainly steal away the only child of the Lord Montcroullier)—had then preserved him alive, and maintained him ever since, with the express design of holding a power over De Varogne, which might, one day, be exerted for his own advantage. The Sieur De Varogne moreover,—notwithstanding that the conference was of his own seeking originally—now detested Grimmfer with a more deadly hatred than ever, for having initiated him into almost the only species of guilt of which he had not before partaken; and for having, with the aid of fiends or hellish spells, lured him on to his ruin, by a sort of promise couched in vague and equivocal terms, but conveying in fact an absolute falsehood.

Twice, in the course of their interview, was Sir Guy worked up, to such rage of heart, to such a pitch of frenzy, that he was about to have put his former accomplice to death upon the spot,—and, as often, daunted by the extraordinary look of

the sorcerer. By the very peculiar and horrible expression of his countenance, which has been alluded to once already; and of which—though it can admit of no exact description—those who had lately seen him, in the Chateau de Largentières, afforded the best account that could be given, when they said, that they suddenly felt, as if no longer in the presence of the same individual; and knew not whether they gazed upon a man or a demon.

Certain it is, that De Varogne, although the flame of his indignation burnt fiercer than ever;—smothered it by strong effort within his breast; and as he hoped, concealed it altogether from his companion.

He lowered his tone, spoke of his manifold disappointments and fallen condition; he added something about the temporary necessity of bending to the storm, and concluded by begging for one more secret interview at the wizard's abode on the following day, for the purpose of consulting

him respecting his own future measures and destination.

To this request, L'Aunony, or, as he was now universally called, Gaspard Grimmfer, deigned to accede; stipulating only, that if his power was to be turned to any real account, the Sieur De Varogne must delay his visit not only until night, but until the moon should be entirely gone down; and that, at all events, he must come unarmed. Sir Guy assented more readily in words than in will. He neither liked the time appointed, nor the mistrust implied by the wizard's precaution, nor the significant tone in which it was delivered. But, being resolved to satiate his revenge to the utmost upon Grimmfer before he quitted France; even, as he afterwards fully confessed, by the measure of assassination itself; and having, now, pretty good reason to be persuaded that an open attack would hardly avail him—he agreed calmly to the proposal; and returned, straightway, to the Castle of Largentières.

Through that evening, and the greater part of the next day, Sir Guy abstained from communication with any human being; and so brutally sullen was the answer which he threw out, when the lady sent to request his attendance at her principal meal— that she consulted—(and, now that the others had left her, and De Varogne remained, almost unattended, within her walls)—consulted, in good earnest, with some of her own people, whether his discourtesy should not be punished by rigorous confinement. But a damp was, discreetly, thrown upon this suggestion; and the dame being reminded that, in a day or two, this odious inmate must, perforce, quit the kingdom— never, according to probability, to trouble that part of it, by his presence, again—— she waved her hand, with a mingled air of contempt and magnanimity; observing, that such as stood in the situation of her guests, might, at all times, be insolent to her with impunity.

Towards evening, Sir Guy demanded,

and readily enough obtained, permission to pass the castle gates at any hour of the night. He made his appearance, therefore, while the chimes were striking the half hour after nine, beneath the inner portal arch; and required the people, who stood on guard there, to lower the bridge for him. The chief Porter, being summoned, stated his willingness to comply; and acknowledged the orders he had received to that effect: but expressed a degree of surprise, that any body should think of venturing abroad at such an hour—on foot too, and without arms. His remonstrance, however, only served to draw down on himself a most indignant reply, with injunctions to busy himself about his own concerns, and those alone; which completely silenced Sir Porter—if they did not satisfy him. The bridge was let down accordingly; De Varogne crossed into the meadows; and from thence—the moon being, as yet, in strength—he gained a path through the wood, which, as he had

previously taken pains to ascertain, led directly, by the shortest possible route, to the foot of the rock, where the Sorcerer, that deceiver to whom he attributed all his calamities, would too surely be found.

The way was short, compared with some others to the same quarter; but it had its intricacies——most of which Sir Guy had now mastered: and he lingered, when within a certain distance of the spot —(a spot which he shuddered to think upon)—as he was not to present himself while the moon remained visible. She had already begun to droop, however; and seemed likely, even before the time, to be overcast by clouds, which, within the last hour, had been gathering together from the southward, in the most threatening, wild, and fantastic forms.

The wind also rose in furious squalls, accompanied by repeated showers, short, but very violent; now, pelting full upon his face, or rattling among the bushes with the force and sound of hail; and

now, sinking into the most profound, and (circumstanced as he was) the most awful stillnesss. De Varogne felt more than a slight inclination to abandon his purpose; but he had a great share of natural boldness, and a still greater of natural obstinacy and wilfulness: when a faintness, therefore, came over his heart, which it frequently did—he thought how the Wizard had duped and injured him, and was confirmed in his determination for vengeance at all hazards.

He was, now, within thirty yards of his object. The moon had completely disappeared; but a light was visible from the air-hole, or window, of the dwelling——first, pale——then, brightening for a second or two——then, fading again, and becoming feebler than ever; as if somebody on the inside had been trying experiments with the flame.

Sir Guy watched this phenomenon, and paused for a few moments; during which interval, the light vanished all at once;

and a voice, which he supposed, and indeed wished, to be Grimmfer's, though it sounded much nearer to himself than it ought to have done, seemed to reproach his irresolution, and exhort him to advance.

He liked his situation less than ever; yet, having nothing to trust to but his own courage, he kept that up by every means in his power; and, with some difficulty, found his way to the door of Gaspard's ill-omened retreat.

On his entrance he saw—(though no lamp was then burning, and what should have supplied the light he could not imagine)—but he plainly discerned the squalid furniture of the place, and its wretched inhabitant, stretched at full length, upon a mat, on the floor.

L'Aunony!" said he, "are you waking? I come hither, man—at thine own time; and conformably to thy desire.——Nay, but if he actually sleepeth——" muttered De Varogne, not averse, apparently, to any excuse for deferring the interview——

Here, a yell of laughter, from the man on the ground, grievously disconcerted and startled, if it did not terrify him.

"What have I to do with sleep, think ye?" cried the Wizard. "Rest for my limbs, and change of position, may now and then be necessary; but, even temporary oblivion belongeth not to me. Noble Knight, we have acted in concert heretofore, as well as since thy late journey from Guienne into these parts; albeit, at the last visit with which you deigned to honour your humble friend and former accomplice, you knew him not. But what am I saying! Let me arise, and greet thee suitably. Let me receive thee, as it becometh the vassal to welcome his lord." So saying, he sprang, with the vigour of youth, upon his feet, and looked hard at Sir Guy; who, from former recollections, declined to meet his gaze.

"'Tis well," said the Sorcerer, in a dry and alarming tone. "I requested thee to

come unarmed; and I see, thou hast graciously complied with my wishes."

At this, Sir Guy folded his cloak about him, more cautiously than before, so as effectually to cover every part of his person, from the face downwards. But, unfortunately, that measure had been too long delayed: the Wizard, whatever might have excited his suspicions, having noticed, distinctly enough, the handle of a poniard concealed between his bosom and the neck of his doublet.

"Homely as is my abode, Sir Knight," said Grimmfer, "I can treat my friends at the proper time, and gratify them with no despicable fare. You will condescend to refresh yourself——you will eat and drink with your old servant?"

"Nothing will I taste this night," returned De Varogne, with an anxious and uneasy, but extremely dangerous aspect: "What meaneth so strange and unseemly a proposal—when I come but to consult thee upon mine own distresses!"

"If I am to impart a knowledge of futurity," said Grimmfer solemnly, "there are THOSE whom I, also, must consult and propitiate. Tarry, for a while, therefore; anon, I shall return to thee."

Before the other could detain him, or even object to his going, the Wizard had disappeared, leaving his companion altogether uncertain how he had withdrawn himself; and, from that moment, De Varogne found his courage hardly equal to the crisis. He still resolved, however, to strike a decisive blow—and that quickly. He drew his dagger; and, stationing himself close by the only entrance to the place, awaited Grimmfer's approach. Just then, the inexplicable light, which had enabled him to see, in some degree, through the whole extent of this murky cavern—was succeeded by darkness as complete, as if he had been at the centre of the earth. He breathed short, and with difficulty; he could rely upon his own fortitude no longer; and, trembling like a child, he

groped round the walls of this horrid habitation, till at length he made his way into the wood.

There, though the night was a dark one, he could partly discern objects at a small distance from himself; and, after some consideration, was convinced that he actually did see an obscure human figure (the Wizard Grimmfer, as he supposed) standing before him.

"Follow me," said a voice, which he still supposed to be Grimmfer's;—"Follow me! and NEVER—" (with a remarkable emphasis on that word)—"lose sight of me more."

Sir Guy felt his boldness reviving, and, with his boldness, all his hatred and malignity, of which he determined, forthwith, to obey the impulse. He followed, therefore, according to the injunction he had received; closed in upon him eagerly; struck at him from behind, and thought he had sheathed the dagger, to the very hilt, in his body. But, to his extreme surprise,

he found that he must have miscalculated the distance between them; for the figure stalked on, with a noiseless step, swift, in truth, though solemn in appearance; nor ever looked round, or, in the least, noticed his hostile attempt.

De Varogne, who had retreated, in some dismay, upon this most unexpected failure, again waxed desperate; and, with poniard uplifted, was running on, in renewed hopes of fully completing his purpose——when some words were whispered in his ear. They immediately paralized his efforts, once more frustrated his blow, wrung his very heart with agony, and made him absolutely frantic. He rushed on, headlong; he grappled with the bushes, for the person who had uttered those words; and, when all was in vain, his ravings, his execrations, were dreadful to hear.

At that instant, a luminous vapour, in appearance like the blue, cold, glimmering of the glow-worm, only much increased in power and dimensions, seemed to arise

from among the bushes, in his front; which enabled him to perceive, that the object of his original pursuit had turned towards him, and stood still, as if waiting to hold parley with him.

In a state of mind but little removed from insanity, De Varogne ran, wildly, to the spot. He had, now, given up all idea of attacking him by stealth, and was ready to meet him, front to front, reckless of the issue.

He approached him, within a few paces; and, aided by the vaporous light, could clearly discern the features of the figure.—— — But it was not the face of Grimmfer: —— it was not the face of any Human Being!

What became of Sir Guy de Varogne, between this time and the hour of sun-rise, he either never could, or never would explain. Some of the country people found

him, soon after day-break, lying amongst the dank weeds, with his face to the ground; and carried him, in an apparent trance, to the Chateau de Largentières.

He recovered his voice, however, during the day; and, by degrees, confessed, both to the priests, and the chirurgeon who attended him, a great portion of what has here been related.

Respecting his intentions to have despatched the Sorcerer, with his own hand, before he left the kingdom, he was particularly explicit: nor, on that head, did he incur much censure.

All lived in hourly dread of Gaspard Grimmfer; churchmen as well as others; and, in those days, Wizards were accounted fair game.

The priest, indeed, always suspected that he had something more to tell; and, from De Varogne's subsequent admissions, it seemed probable that such suspicion was not ill-founded: for, he threw out more than insinuations about some horrible com-

munication which had been made to him, in the course of that night—but whether by men, or fiends, did not appear.

At length, Sir Guy grew calm and tractable; and, on condition that they should cease from molesting him for the present—he promised to detail to them the whole dreadful scene, without any reservation, on the morning of the ensuing Thursday. This he vowed: nor was there any reason to doubt that he would have kept his promise,——but for a fit of raging delirium, which seized him on the Wednesday night; in the progress of which, after saying much that was utterly unintelligible, this misguided man expired.

The horror, consternation, babbling, lies, and noise, produced by this event throughout the village and neighbourhood, exceed all power of description. The great Dame herself, the Lady of Altdorf and Largentières, was terrified out of her senses almost, and never had a night's sound sleep for upwards of a month. Nevertheless, she

by no means neglected this opportunity of haranguing her menials; and told them to take heart and example by her; for that, if they were not afraid till they saw her so—there would be little enough uneasiness amongst any of them. Elves, Imps, Demons, and Witches (she said), were, to a bold heart and clear conscience, no more than the grasshopper that chirps beneath our feet.

Meanwhile, the ecclesiastics, who deemed it foul shame that such a miscreant as Grimrafer should be suffered to exert his horrid art with impunity, applied to a mitred Abbot, of much sanctity and influence, in the north of France; who took the same view of the subject, and sent an armed party to apprehend him. But that was not so easily effected. The Sorcerer had fled; whether by day, or night, nobody could tell. And though he was often afterwards seen, or said to have been seen, for short periods together, in that quarter——no one would ever venture to affirm that he had

spoken to him, still less, that he had attempted to lay hands upon him.

How he died is not altogether clear. There were stories of his having been broken on the wheel in one of the Swiss Cantons, burnt in Italy, and impaled in Hungary.

The two former are confessedly fictions. —The Hungarian report rests on somewhat better authority: but, though it is certain that he was satisfactorily recognized there, secured, proceeded against for his manifold misdeeds, and condemned to death — — they still persist in saying, that the person who suffered was not Grimmfer.

THE END.

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